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May 2007

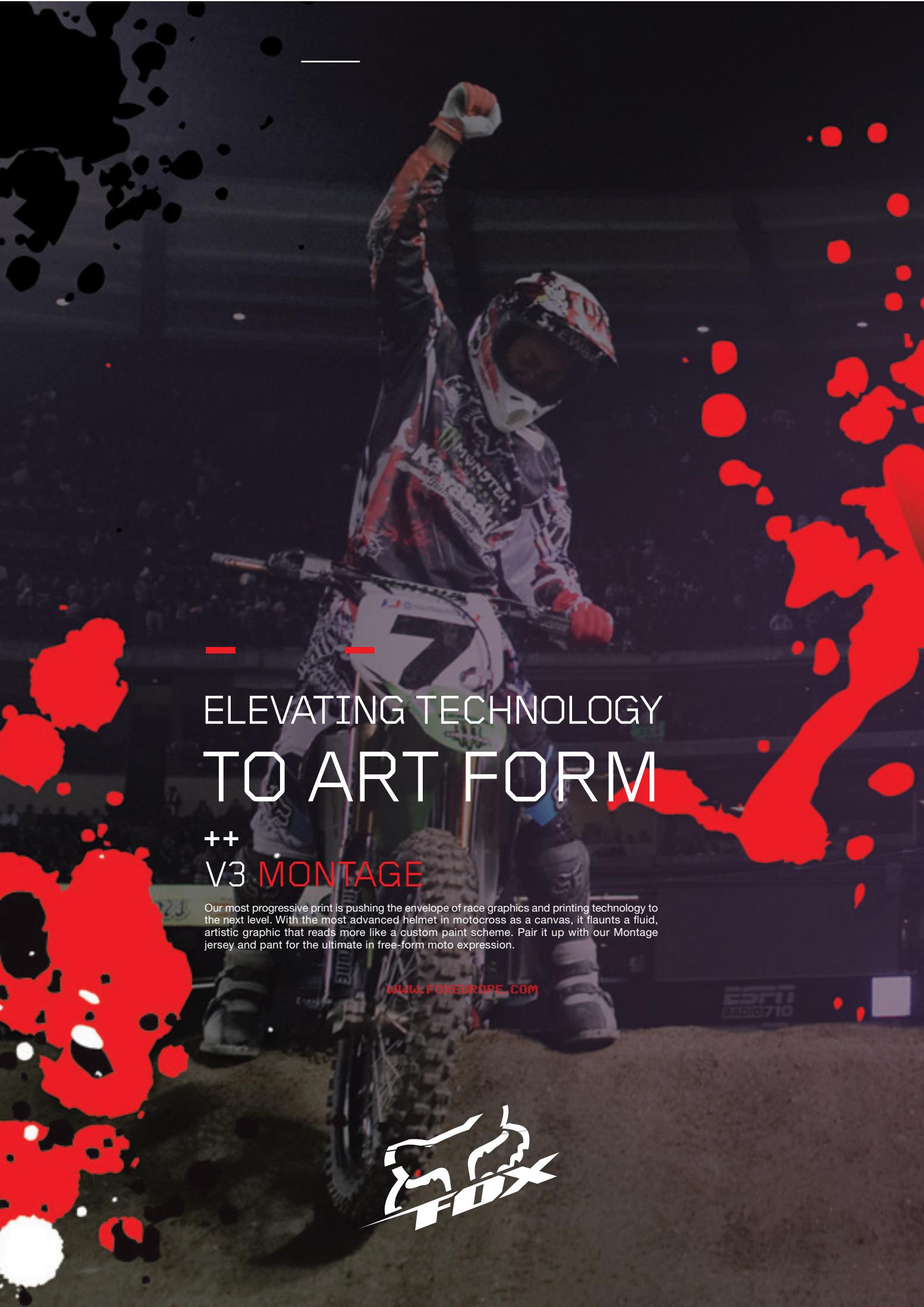
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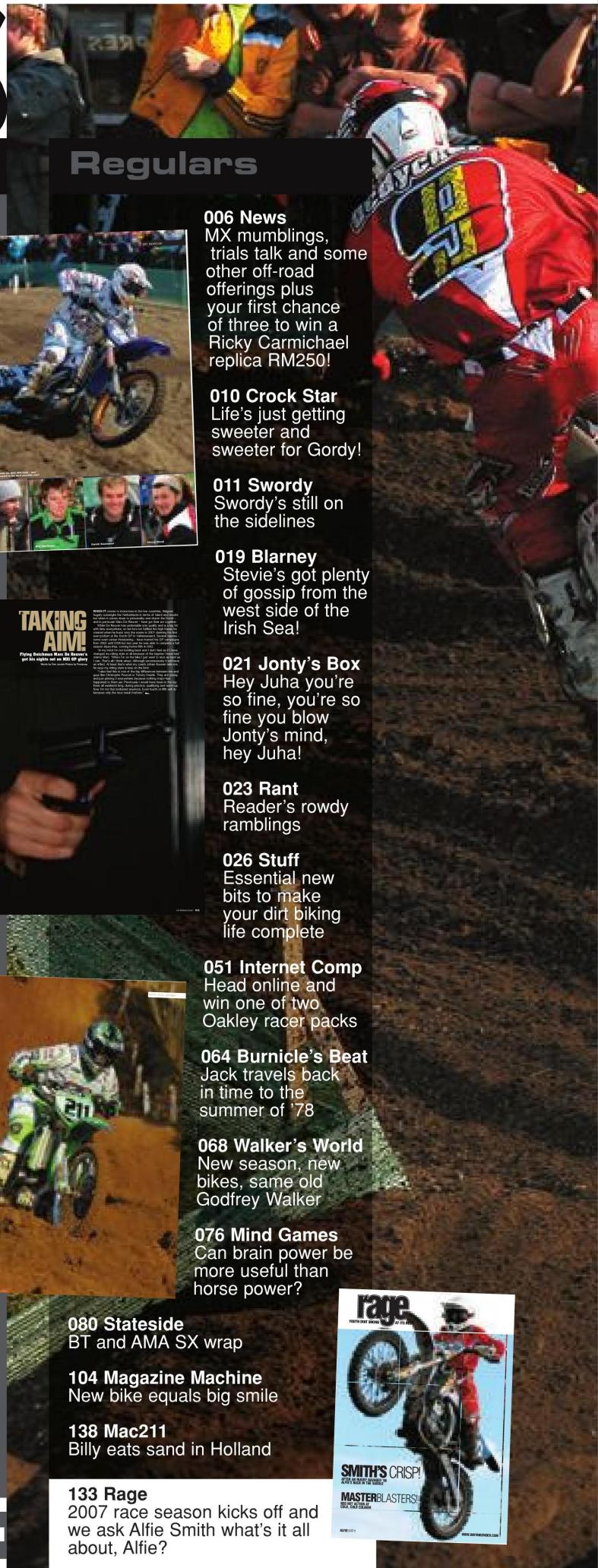
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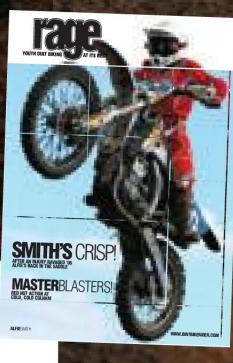
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## Mac Smack!

*Racing GPs is an up and down kinda deal – one minute you're closing in on Ken De Dycker and looking good for the pass, the next you're on your wee Haggis-eating arse after making (according to Sutty) the sort of mistake expected from an AMCA Junior! Luckily, Billy Mac's big enough to laugh at the Dawg's tongue-in-cheek remark – and determined enough to come out all guns blazing at round two of the world championships in Bellpuig!*

# COMMENT

JUST WHAT is it that makes a rider a 'great'? Is it down to titles won? Or career longevity? Or attitude? Maybe it's all about the ability to overcome adversity that elevates a rider all the way up to the heady heights of 'greatness'.

With 10 world titles, 101 GP wins and a professional career stretching back to the late '80s – not to mention nearly dying in '92 and losing two consecutive seasons to injury in '99 and Y2K – Stefan Everts seems to have all the right attributes to be considered a 'great'. On the other side of the pond a little ginger fellow by the name of Ricky Carmichael also appears to possess all the right qualities – although, Yanks being Yanks, RC isn't just 'a great', he's the Greatest Of All Time!

The truth is it's impossible to come up with a conclusive argument to ever categorically call someone the GOAT – even riders as dominant as RC and Everts. It is, after all, incredibly subjective. AMA fans will always tend to side with Ricky, GP fans with Stefan. Would Ricky have managed 10 world titles in Europe? Would Stefan have managed 16 AMA titles? It's one of those delicious imponderables that has no hard and fast answer.

Now let's roll the clock back a bit and inject some history into the mix! How would Ricky and Stefan fair against, say, Joel Robert who won five 250cc world titles in a row from '68 to '72? And seeing as we're enjoying a spot of time tourism what about 'The Man' Roger De Coster? Or Andre Malherbe? Or Eric Geboers? Or Dave Thorpe? Or Ricky Johnson? Or David Bailey? And it's not just motocross! With seven world outdoor crowns each, is Jordi Tarres better than Dougie Lampkin or is it the other way around? Dougie won his on the trot but was Jordi's competition stiffer? And would Eddy Lejeune or Sammy Miller have beaten them both?

The point I'm making is there's no fixed point to measure the GOAT against (despite what Jonty Edmunds may try and tell you this month on page 21). Technology changes and with it so do tracks and sections and riding techniques – in fact, the whole nature of off-road sport changes – and the best anyone can hope for is to be the leading rider of their generation (and to be mentioned in the same breath as the great champions who've preceded them).

Of course, just because you can't call someone the GOAT it shouldn't stop you having your own personal heroes. As a trials riding nipper in the Northern Centre my first role model was Nigel Birkett. Later, along with the vast majority of British off-road addicts, I graduated to Dave Thorpe and later still – even though in '01 he still had almost as many critics as fans – it was Jamie Dobb. Can you get any more heroic than winning a GP around Namur with two busted collarbones?

If pushed now to name my all-time favourite rider I reckon I'd have to say Trampas Parker. Why? Well, it's partly because of his two world titles. And it's partly because of how close he came to becoming only the second rider to attain the '875'. And it's partly because he was such an approachable bloke. But mainly it's because I love the idea of an American turning his back on Uncle Sam, moving to Europe and spending his career racing 'our' world championship.

And you know something? Thinking about it, whatever standard you're at – and whether your poison is trials, MX or enduro – riding bikes off-road is the kind of deal that can make heroes out of all of us. Well, almost all of us...

Sean

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An EFI unit – soon to be seen on production bikes from the Big Four?



Factory steering damper – trick!



## TOP SECRET!

We take a sneaky look at the big four's factory scoots in Japan

**IF YOU** want to know what your future dirt scooter will be coming equipped with in the next few years the best thing to do is ignore the MX1 and MX2 world championships (unless it's KTM's you really care about) and look to the Land of the Rising Sun – that's Japan if you haven't already figured it out.

The All Japan MX series is the national championship where the Japanese factory teams do the majority of their race testing on pre-production models. The big buzz word at this year's Nats is Electronic Fuel Injection (EFI) with three of the big four manufacturers already running carburetorless 450s in anger.

Honda not only have an injection induced 450 – which according to several Honda staff members will be standard fit on the '08 CRF450 – but an EFI-equipped CRF250 as well. It's worth remembering that Honda have a good head-start in the electronic age as they – and anyone who bought one – have been trying and testing EFI on their Montesa 4RTs in world trials since '05. In theory Honda are good to go.

Suzuki appear to have a new 450 on the way and the good news is it's a much sleeker looking

model than their current bus and has a similar looking frame to their current RM-Z 250. Whether an incarnation of this bike will be launched to the public in 2008 – or later – remains to be announced but the frame of the bike ridden by development rider Hiroshi Nakayama does appear to be a mass-produced production-style item rather than a one-off special.

As well as EFI, Yamaha's works weapons have something else worthy of grabbing the attention of tech-freaks worldwide – tiny silencers. Despite being so short in length the factory YZF's silencers easily pass the 96db FIM sound limit. We can only assume there's something radical happening within the stock-looking silencer (it's stamped with all the legal crap that stock silencers come with) as it's visibly much shorter than the YZF450's current standard silencer.

Kawasaki are the only team not to have at least one bike running EFI at the races. It is possible that Kawasaki are testing privately behind closed doors but we reckon the all-conquering KXFs will be coming as standard with carburetors for at least another year.

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# BOU SHOW!

**Toni on top and Dougie in third as WTC kicks off in Spain**

**NEWLY-CROWNED** world indoor champ Toni Bou (left) keeps his winning momentum going when he comes out on top at the opening round of the '07 WTC, staged at Mancha Real in Spain.

In a high-scoring trial the Spanish teenager completes his opening lap for 34, one mark ahead of defending champ Adam Raga, before pulling clear on the second circuit with a loss of just 24 compared to Raga's 30. And he can even afford the luxury of two time penalties...

Dougie Lampkin's bid for an eighth world outdoor crown starts with a solid third place after he beats former champ Takahisa Fujinami on a most-cleans tie-break. And there's another Brit in the top six as James Dabill posts his best world round result to date in his WTC debut for the Italian-based Future Montesa team but Shaun Morris just misses out on a top 10 finish.

The Junior category gets a British winner with Michael Brown storming home to a 27-mark victory over Frenchman Nicolas Gontard with Alexz Wigg – restricted to a 125 by FIM age regulations – showing he can cut it at this level in third. And down in the Youth division Ross Danby pilots his Gasser onto the final step of the podium behind Alfredo Gomez and Alexis Cervantes.

All-in-all not a bad weekend at the office for British trials riders...



## LILLEHAMMERED!

**Norwegian pair luge the plot!**

Photos by DMW Foto

**BEER! YOU'VE** got to love it! Here at DBR some of our most inspired moments of stupidity have resulted from an excess of loony juice – and we can only presume that plentiful pints had been sunk when someone decided to tackle the Olympic bobsled track at Lillehammer. On two wheels.

James Bond was chased by XT500s down a bobsled track in 1981's classic *For Your Eyes Only* and that, coupled with the aforementioned liquid refreshment, proved sufficient inspiration for Manchester-based Norwegian bike journo Tor Sagen and Dakar veteran Gjermund Frostad to recreate the stunt.

By now totally sober and armed with studded tyres, an XT660R and a '07 WR450F, Tor and Gjermund first completed a successful ascent of the 1750m track. And once at the top? Well, what goes up...

"To protect the ice from the sun, sails are fitted on a large part of the track," explains the Mancunian Viking. "On the tall enduro bikes I had to keep my head down or risk decapitation." And that wasn't the only danger. "In the bankings the risk was that the suspension decompressed mid-corner causing loss of grip and gravity! You've got to ride seriously fast to stick to those ice walls!"

"A bobsled sticks to the walls by the help of gravity, speed and a true 5Gs – all I had was 50 odd brake horse power and two wheels peppered with sharp ice studs. Top speed was just above 60mph but I could have gone faster. Frostad managed a time of about 70 seconds while a bobsled can do it in 55 seconds."



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**On the cover: The  
Greatest Of All Time?**  
There are some who  
would disagree (Stefan  
Everts for starters) but  
Ricky Carmichael –  
who's finally retired  
from SX – is a true icon  
(Steve Cox)

# WIN! WIN! WIN!

## RC replica RM250 must be won

**HE'S A** living legend, the winningest rider in AMA history and even though he's semi-retired **Ricky Carmichael** is still the fastest man in motocross – and now we've got a RC replica RM250 two-smoker up for grabs.

We've teamed up with Suzuki GB to offer one lucky winner the chance to get their mitts on a brand-new RM250 with RC's Team Makita graphics, One Industries seat cover and gold SM Pro rims. We tested it last month and according to Tony Marshall the RC rep "pulls hard from right down low and keeps on ripping through the range" – just the thing for die-hard two-stroke fans.

The competition starts this month and continues in our June issue before signing off in July. In each of the three special competition editions we'll be asking a simple Suzuki-related multiple choice question – all you have to do is send in your answer and keep those fingers crossed.

Each question requires only one correct answer – this way if you miss one of the competition issues you can still enter but, even better, if you get all three mags you'll get three separate shots at winning the RM250!

And, as an added bonus, readers can also hook up to our website at [www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com) where they can follow the competition link to find a fourth question – yep, that's yet another chance to win!

You can either wait until the July question and stuff all your entries into one envelope or just send your entries in one-by-one – all we ask is that entries are submitted on official entry forms (so no photocopies or computer scans etc).

So don't miss next month's DBR for another chance to win!



### QUESTION #1

**What is Ricky Carmichael's nickname?**

A) The GOAT      B) The STOAT  
C) The red setter    D) Mr Howler Monkey

Answer

Name

Address

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# STEPHEN SWORD

## NEARLY THERE!

AFTER 11 MONTHS OUT OF ACTION, SWORDY FINALLY GETS BACK ON A BIKE AT VALKENSWAARD – IT'S JUST A SHAME IT ISN'T FOR THE GP...

WORDS BY STEPHEN SWORD PHOTO BY RAYARCHER.COM

ANOTHER MONTH gone by, another month closer to throwing my leg over a bike! I've seen improvements in my leg over the past few weeks and good training with DT plus good results with my physio are all very encouraging for me!

A few days ago I had an appointment with my doctor in Belgium and the day after that I had to attend a press conference for Kawasaki at Valkenswaard so it all tied in nicely. My appointment was first thing on Thursday morning so we set off the day before and stopped in a hotel. The doc was happy with my progress and how the ankle was looking and he did some blood tests to check that my infection had cleared up and I'm pleased to say that it has. But for the next six months I have to get my blood checked regularly to make sure it doesn't come back...

So with this good news I headed to the Molson Kawasaki workshop in Belgium. It was my first time there so I had to ring Hot Tub for directions. First impressions were, er, impressive but after chief mechanic Fred gave me a guided tour I was even more impressed! Everyone was working really hard and the whole place just looked really professional.

I walked into the canteen where Lance 'TC'

Armstrong was spinning out his legs. He was fully lycra'd up and looking lovely – especially compared to Geoff 'Rich Tea' Walker who was sat behind him, whipping his ass and telling him to go faster. Whatever tickles your fancy ladies...

Wakker's first words to me were "get the kettle on Haggis" – any excuse to break into the biscuit barrel, eh Geoff? Anyway, Hot Tub and my mechanic, Serge, joined us and we sat around enjoying the usual MX banter while Rich Tea was on the internet watching some video of Chad Reed on his practice track. We had the craic for about an hour then all the guys had to leave with the truck to go to Valkenswaard. Jodie and I went for a swim for a few hours and then we hooked up with TC and Rich Tea for some dinner.

We went to this place called the Arcade which wasn't bad for Belgium and the food was pretty good. We ate and chewed the fat for a bit but Rich Tea had a few beers and started to look a bit tipsy so we decided to get him home. As we were leaving the Motovision boys and Mac211 were just coming in so we chatted for five and got on back. TC and Rich Tea were staying at the workshop so I dropped them off before heading back to the hotel.

The next day I rolled up at Valkenswaard around midday. The Kawasaki press conference was a big thing so a rehearsal was called for. All the other Kawasaki teams were involved and each rider had to come into the conference riding their bike – it was a great moment for me, the first time I'd even sat on a bike since last May! After my mechanic reminded me where the clutch, throttle and brakes were I was ready to go and it felt so good, even though I was riding slowly without my helmet or kit on. I couldn't resist giving it a little squirt and dumped the clutch on the carpet on the way in – I got arm-pump after about 10 metres!

The whole day was a success and it was great for me to be involved at the races again. But I decided not to stay and watch and instead went back to continue with my training.

We're moving house this week so I will be busy with packing and shifting stuff for a few days. There have been a few delays with the move so it will be nice to get in and settled before I start riding – which shouldn't be too long if I keep progressing like I have over the past few weeks. I'm not setting a date but in the next three weeks I'll have some indication on when I think the time will be right.

## MMX UPDATE

### U21 and thumper series blasts off at Matchams

Words and photos by Toby Fuller

**NEW SEASON** – new contenders? The opening round of the 2007 CCM-backed MMX series kicks off at Matchams but last year's champions – Brad Anderson (Pioneer Yamaha) and Jim Murro (Moggstar KTM) – don't start the season on top.

An in-form Anderson powers his Yamaha to pole position in qualifying and is looking a top bet for the four-stroke class but bike problems on the opening lap force an early retirement. Twisted 7's Bryan MacKenzie is the main benefactor and leads all but the final four laps when another green machine goes past in the hands of a rejuvenated Mark Hucklebridge. The MotoXtreme pilot takes a controlled win with Wayne Smith and Danny Smyth in his wake.

After losing valuable points in the opener Anderson's looking to make amends in race two and that's exactly what he does. After only a lap he's soon in front bossing the race and eventually wins by eight seconds from Smith and Huck.

The U21s look to be wide open this year and with no fewer than eight race winners in '06 the country's top young guns are queuing up to take top honours. And it's Molson Kawasaki's Ray Rowson who rises to the challenge to take a double victory and stake an early claim to the title.



Ray Rowson is on form in the U21s



Wayne Smith goes 2-2 in the thumpers



## WIN! WIN! WIN!

### TGO: Industrial Strength DVDS

**THE GREAT** Outdoors movies from No Fear have long been thought of as the benchmark for all motocross films as they're well shot and awesomely entertaining while offering a behind the scenes look at our beloved sport and in particular the AMA outdoor nationals.

Industrial Strength holds up TGO's honour as it's impossible to dislike any movie that features the line 'there's no I in team' within the first scene. From there the action comes thick and fast as both the Motocross and Lites seasons unfold in front of the TGO cameras in this 60-minute epic of much motocross magnificence.

Available from the Videohouse – go to [www.thvideohouse.co.uk](http://www.thvideohouse.co.uk) – at a measly £21.95 Industrial Strength is not gonna break the bank. But if funds are a little low or you're tighter than a large publishing company's salary budget then you might wanna have a pop at winning one of five TGO: Industrial Strength DVDS in our free to enter competition.

All you have to do to win one copy is answer this simple question. Which rider won the Lites class title in the 2006 AMA Outdoor Nationals? Was it:

- A) Ryan Villopoto
- B) Mike Alessi
- C) Broc Hepler
- D) Ryan Villopoto
- E) Ivan Tedesco

When you think you know the answer head over to [www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com) and fill in the form or write it – it being the answer – along with your name, address, IQ and a daytime telephone number on the back of a postcard or sealed down envelope. Then send it to Videohouse Comp #1, DBR Magazine, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe, Lancashire, LA4 4AG. The first five correct entries drawn after the closing of May 10 will win a DVD.

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# GORDON CROCKARD

## FLAT-OUT

TWO BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP ROUNDS, A BRITISH MASTERS AND THE OPENING GP OF THE YEAR – THE SEASON'S IN FULL SWING AND IT'S BUSINESS AS USUAL FOR THE CROCK STAR

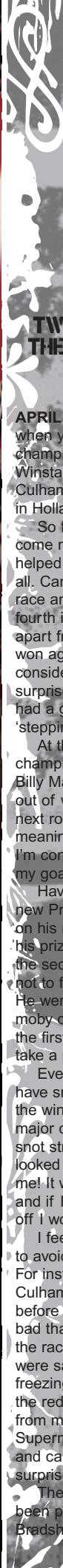
WORDS BY GORDON CROCKARD PHOTO BY SUTTY

Heights and has been finding it tough to ride. Then Shane Carless dislocated his shoulder at Landrake and Alex Rach recently hurt his ankle – get well ASAP boys. And more bad news is that some dirtbag stole my two Fro bikes stands from the truck/awning area at Canada Heights – can you believe some people? Quality scum!

Anyway, moving on... I had a trip up the country to Mold in north Wales for an open night at the ER Williams MX shop a couple of weeks ago. They make a big effort for the night and it's a busy place with plenty to see. I was representing the PAR team and enjoyed chatting with everyone.

At the time of writing it's the Thursday before the opening GP at Valkenswaard in Holland. I drove over here after Landrake and went riding yesterday at a practice track in Eersel. It cost 10 Euros (about £6) and was in perfect condition – most of the tracks I practice on in England are £25 and, as I like to ride twice a week, it all soon adds up to a fair difference. A good number of GP riders were there, even five-time world champ Joel Smets who was testing WP suspension and helping with final preparations for the MTM Suzuki team. He hadn't been on a bike since the ISDE back in November and after his first few laps he was shocked at how much of a wake-up call it was for him. Out of breath and scared of bumps isn't how Joel remembered racing to be but, in reality, that's how it is – Joel had just remembered the good bits!

PS Check out [www.crockstar.co.uk](http://www.crockstar.co.uk)



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## Fighting Spirit!

*It would be all too easy to base this caption around the fact this wouldn't be the first time a second-hand feeling TC has sprayed vast amounts of brown stuff from his rear end at a GP. But that would just be mean and unnecessary... So instead of tearing down Tom - who recently took his first British championship moto win since 2004 - we're gonna celebrate the fact he showed true fighting spirit at Valkenswaard. After being nailed from behind by another rider over a double jump, TC got back on his bent up Molson Kawasaki and rejoined the fray only to be stopped several laps later by an over-zealous official armed with a black flag.*

*"The whole race was basically a nightmare," claims TC. "Someone jumped on me in a double section and bent the gearshift lever as well as ripping my shirt. I came into the pits after also getting caught in the green fencing. We can't find anything in the rules about destroyed clothing meaning a disqualification."*

Photo by Plons

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# IRISH AYES!

**GORDY AND MARTY GET IN THE GP POINTS AT VALKENSWAARD WHILE TOMMY CLEANS UP AT HOME...**

ONE OF the greatest aspects of this sport of ours is that you simply cannot buy your way to the top. Sure, Mr Money Bags can purchase most of the bling factory parts that are sprinkled all over the GP riders' machines but they ain't going to help Money Bags Jnr become world class unless he has a lot of talent to start with plus the determination to train, test and fight from gate to flag.

One man who has confirmed his work ethic so far is Rainey Brothers Honda rider Tommy Merton who has pretty much stamped on the opposition so far on the national circuits. At round one of the Ulster champs at Desertmartin Tommy was not headed for a moment all day to go 1-1 and take the series lead. Moto-One's Wayne Garrett collected 2-2 on the day while a surprise third place in the standings after round one is AJ/Elite Bathrooms-backed Dave Gorman, the only man piloting a two-smoker. Mike Sinton on the Russell's Honda made the going in race one but he crashed heavily out of contention next time out, badly bruising his right shoulder.

Southern centre youngster Stuart Edmunds is coming of age and since he boarded the CCM/TM 450 he's qualified and scored points in the British MX1 championship. Stuart was impressive at Desertmartin and for my money he's a contender for top Irish championship honours this season.

Staying on the subject of the British championship, GC has taken his first race win of 2007 to lay solid foundations for the rest of his championship challenge. And Martin Barr surprised a few people at the Hawkstone International and followed that up with a podium at Canada Heights on his return to MX2.

Intouch/Moto-One team leader in 2007, Wayne Garrett is finding his feet in the Maxxis MX2 series – a solid start from which to build. Scoring points and gaining experience is the key. Pioneer Yamaha's Robert Hamilton showed lightning starts at round one, taking good points during the day. And congratulations to Wulfsport's Adam McKee on making the grade at Landrake – here's hoping Adam can follow in the tyre tracks of Wulfsport Kawasaki's Shaun Simpson.

Now for some GP news! Having Irishmen taking points in both MX1 and MX2 in the world championships is exciting to say the least. GC recovered well from a big off in qualifying to finish a strong 11th in the second moto in the extremely deep Dutch sand – good enough for 15th in the standings. Roll on the hard-pack tracks!

Martin took his first MX2 points first time out. After a superb qualification race for ninth the Bike it Yamaha rider scored a fine 16th in the second moto, confirming yet again his world class potential.

Congratulations to the Killinchy Club whose Hogans Bar-sponsored annual John Donnelly MX at Downpatrick was a resounding success. A good crowd turned out and were rewarded with close and competitive racing throughout all five groups. Merton blitzed qualifying by nearly five seconds but failed to have his name engraved on the prestigious trophy after crashing in race one. Making no such mistakes for the rest of the day, Tommy convincingly won the remaining two motos.

With its £4000 plus prize fund the John Donnelly always provides 'proper racing' – Merton, Garrett, Sinton, Gorman and the surprise package of Edmunds and his 450 TM kept the crowds entertained in the Co Down sunshine. Wayne Garrett had the lion's share of the wages scoring 1-2-2 on his KTM.

Round one of the Great Stuff Catering South Western MX championship got off to a great start in the fair city of Cork. Derek Buckley and the Munster club ran the meeting well and a large crowd were treated to some great racing.

Desertmartin on April 21 will mark the opening of the Irish national championship season and the usual suspects will be joined by a few new faces this time around. And the absence of McCullough will open the door for a new champion for 2007.

Summer is on the horizon and with it will come longer nights, BBQ Man (Night Man's cousin) and the

MARTIN BARR MARKED HIS RETURN TO THE MX2 CLASS WITH A PODIUM AT CANADA HEIGHTS



midweek SX series which will get started on May 16 at Ballymoney. Put it in your diary – now!

See you all at the races...

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# ENDURO GOAT!

**BACK IN THE WEC – AND COMPETING IN THE BEC – JUHA SALMINEN LOOKS SET TO CONTINUE HIS EIGHT-YEAR DOMINATION OF OFF-ROAD SPORT**

**JUHA SALMINEN** is enduro's Greatest Of All Time! Now I know that comments like this are bold statements to say the least and that picking one rider to receive such an accolade ahead of others from previous generations is difficult and uncertain. But I have little doubt that Juha is the greatest enduro rider we are ever likely to see. Don't get me wrong – riders like David Knight and Stephane Peterhansel are, in their own way, better than Juha (one's the world's best extreme event rider and the other's the world's most successful Dakar entrant) but when it comes to enduro Juha is king.

Having watched the laidback Finn claim each of his six WEC titles, seen him win numerous indoor enduro events, rejoiced when he posted some impressive results during his MXGP 'guest appearances' in '03 and then witnessed his domination of consecutive US GNCC championships in '05 and '06 before going on to claim his first overall ISDE win, I have little doubt that he is the best there is and ever will be. Juha, as far as I'm concerned, sits comfortably alongside Stefan Everts and Ricky Carmichael in the GOAT club. The only difference between the other two riders and Juha is that 'Yahoo' isn't finished winning on a motorcycle yet.

As a rider that subscribes to the 'it's nice to be important but much more important to be nice' theory, Juha is not only one of the fastest off-road motorcycle riders on the planet but also one of the nicest and most professional. Caring not for fame nor

wanting to be dazzled by any bright spotlights that could rightfully be shined upon him, Juha's typically Finnish and this cool, calm and collected approach to his racing is, in part, what has helped his achieve so much.

Winning numerous titles is pretty much the only thing needed to qualify a rider as a GOAT with the way in which these titles are won counting only as further proof of a rider's 'greatness'. Like Everts, Carmichael, Schumacher and Rossi even, Juha's list of title winning achievements is impressive to say the least. Always seeking new challenges, Juha has won titles aboard 125cc and 250cc two-strokes and on 400cc, 450cc and 500cc four-stroke machinery – something few riders have come close to achieving.

Unbeaten during six consecutive years in the WEC, Juha opted to head to the States to take up a new challenge. Sure, winning in the US after claiming a world title in Europe had been done before – by Aussie Shane Watts – but what Juha achieved was far more impressive. After winning all there was to win in Europe he headed to the US and dominated the '05 GNCC series with style. He then opted to remain in the US to give his rivals the chance for revenge and dominated the series to make it two-from-two in the States and bring his title tally to eight – six WEC and two US GNCC titles.

Part of what makes Juha such a great competitor is his ability to deal with seemingly anything. Be it pressure, a mechanical problem,

wondering why his roll-off system still isn't working one hour into a GNCC race having forgotten that he'd put one first-corner tear-off over the top of them – nothing flusters him when he's on a bike. Being able to remain cool – even when a world title depends on the final special test of the final round as it did in Sweden in '02 – is what makes Juha a truly unique competitor.

But like many great champions Juha has learned that winning a championship doesn't always mean winning every race. Juha wrapped



up last season's US GNCC early. Mission accomplished. US racers well and truly beaten...again. But aware that he was heading back to Europe and the WEC after first competing in the New Zealand ISDE, Juha opted to start preparing for his newest challenge – that of competing aboard a 250cc four-stroke for the first time ever – rather than simply continuing to win races aboard a bike he knew well.

Trading in his trusty 250cc two-stroke, Juha started racing aboard a 250cc thumper. And guess what? Juha got beaten. But he didn't care. His job was done and the title his. Getting as much race practice on a machine new to him was now much, much more important. With Juha caring little about the 'I think they might have beaten him even if he weren't on a thumper' comments that followed his late season defeats, Juha had the last laugh when he added an overall ISDE title to his US GNCC crown to make '06 one hell of a season. All of which proves that Juha truly is the greatest of all time.

And the best thing is he's not finished with winning yet. Looking very much the rider to beat in this year's E1 world championship, Juha will also compete in the Metzeler ACU Solo British Enduro Championship. Not because he has to. Not because doing so is massively financially rewarding. But because he wants to try something new and keep himself 'fresh'. And with Juha competing in the BEC it means that – unlike with Everts and Carmichael – there's still time to watch one of the world's greatest motorcycle riders in action. A chance not to be missed.



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## F-ING CRAZY!

Since Honda launched the 150F prices of 85s have fallen like stones which has been good for us parents who can now pick up a new 85 for just under £2000 if you look around. I bought my son a CR85 a month before the 150F came out and I cursed at first but luckily the AMCA's current ruling is that the 150F must be ridden with the 125s and the 250Fs in the under-18s as the Inter-Juniors is for up to 100cc two-strokes and 125cc four-strokes.

I'm sure with the 150F revolution the AMCA will change its ruling next year as there are certain to be more 150Fs available. It's still unknown if the 150F will dominate but the feedback I have been given from parents (probably an unreliable source) is that it can knock off up to five seconds a lap (depending on the ability of the rider).

Obviously other manufacturers must be hard at work trying to develop their 150s so I thought I would scour the t'interweb to see what I could find. There seems to be some interesting bikes on the way from KTM and Yamaha. Are they real or has some clever bugger been messing about with their computer?

Andy, Yorkshire

Although some of the other manufacturers are flat out producing mini four-poppers of their own the images you attached to your email are all Photoshop fakes – mostly 250F motors in current 85s. Be patient Andy and all will be revealed...

## TOTALLY ROCKSTAR, DUDE!

I'd just like to start by saying your magazine is totally awesome and I totally love the Stateside section – it rocks dudes! Where can I get my hands on one of those totally bitchin' Rockstar team hoodies? I've tried looking online but I can't find anything anywhere and it totally sucks dude – can you help please?

Jamie, via email

There's good news for you and for anyone else who wants anything from the One Industries team clothing range of hoodies, tees and hats. Give Chi-Chi at Rush Racing a call on 01404 549696 – or log on to [www.rushracing.co.uk](http://www.rushracing.co.uk) – and they'll hook you up.

## YOUNGEST READER?

I just wanted to let you see this photo of my husband (Jason) and our son reading Dirt Bike Rider magazine. Charlie was just four hours old when the photograph was taken, hence the reason he still has the hat on his head which the midwives put on after a baby is born!

Jason currently rides the Hare and Hound series and is sponsored by James Sandiford Motorcycles. I have a feeling that he'd like Charlie and his sister Taylor to follow in his footsteps! He isn't aware that I've forward the photo to yourselves as yet as I was hoping it may get published before he thinks to remind me to send it in! Hopefully he'll see it in his next delivered copy!

Melanie, via email

Awwwww!



## LUCK OF THE DRAWER!

After not buying DBR for a while I got the latest issue and it's awesome! After having a good day at Hawkstone I thought I'd send you a drawing I did of Tyla Rattray who I'd also like to thank for giving me his jersey. I was hoping that you could publish my drawing in your next issue. I also did a drawing of Sean Hamblin who also gave me his shirt. I look forward to getting the next issue and I'm definitely going to subscribe.

Matthew, via email



## BURGER KING?

I recently saw someone who looked like Geoff Walker in Burger King but I'm sure I read he does all his training in McDonalds – was it him?

Angus, Aberdeen

Probably. Yes.

## AUSSIE RULES!

I recently went on a once in a lifetime trip to visit family in Australia. While I was there my cousin's boyfriend Christo invited me out to his parents' ranch to have a go on his bikes and let him show me how to do it.

I was given a CR500 while Christo rode his WR450 and we went out in the bush dodging trees, kangaroos and snakes for two hours without having to stop for any gates or fences. It really put the fun back into riding.

While I was there it was Australia day and the local town of Clermont celebrated by having the local motocross club ride through town to celebrate.

I heard that Michael Byrne was one of the local boys back in the day and that Chad Reed also used to ride around there. It makes me wonder why we can't celebrate the sport in the same way over here.

Kevin, Lancashire

*Sounds like you had a ripper time mate!*





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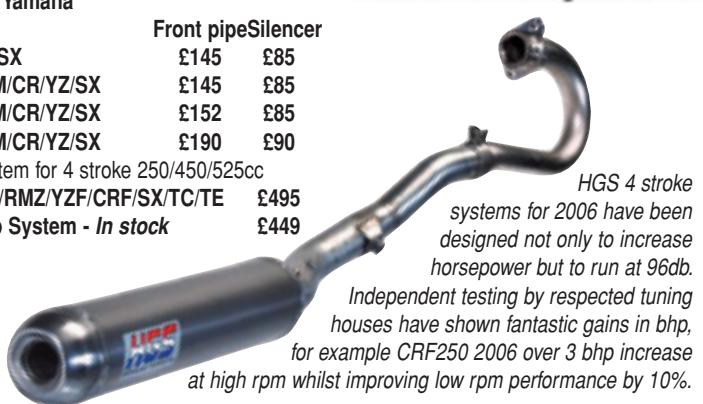
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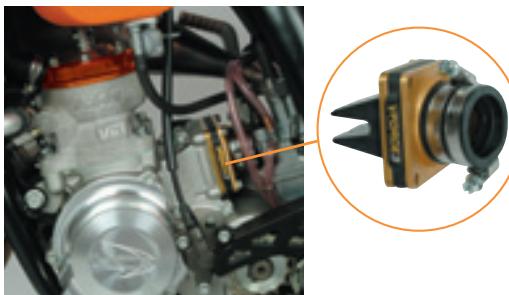


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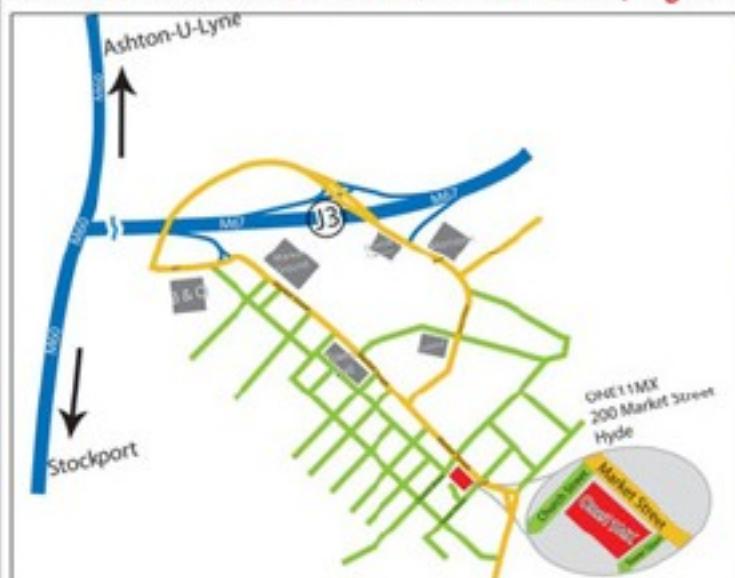
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# DOUBLE DUTCH!

**Yamaha top MX1 and MX2 as the world championship season kicks off in Holland**

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

**THE PRE-SEASON** shakedowns are done and dusted and it's time to put up or shut up as the big guns of world MX converge on Valkenswaard in Holland for the opening round of the 2007 world championship.

And at the end of the weekend it's the Yamaha men who have the satisfied grins on their faces! Josh Coppins has just won on his blue GP debut – in sand – and Tony Cairoli has done the double to leave Christophe Pourcel to do the chasing this year.

There are heroes and villains all along the line. After Coppins makes the Belgians look sick in the first moto, there are those ready to give him the crown then and there – after all, "sand is my weakness" reckons the Kiwi! But even Josh has to hold up his hands in race two. "Barragan was too fast for me. I couldn't catch him."

Ken De Dycker is on another planet for speed and nobody gets within half-a-second of him all day on Saturday. Race day starts no differently but despite responding to Princey's pleas to ride a pace he can maintain the big guy is still shot at 15 minutes. But at least he only goes back to third behind Steve Ramon. CAS are getting there with their Belgian giant.

Billy Mac is gutted after what should have been top six in both motos evaporates. "I messed up in the last three laps of race one when I started riding defensively and tensed up. And it blew my mind in race two when Priem passed me just when I thought I was going to get Ken for sixth."

James Noble is a new man at times – flamboyant, attacking even. Mid-moto tension in race one and a slip five laps into race two cost him points but the direction is right and he is top 10 both times. But Gordy just wants to forget it. "I was very unprepared. I've had a cold, had no practice in sand and rode with a negative attitude."

Defending MX2 champ Chris Pourcel is French and expresses it differently. "I had difficulty finding the lines in the first race and was not feeling confident on the bike." But he finds a radical line in race two – right down the side of Tommy Searle.

Tommy Gun is not amused. He's already binned it at turn one in the opener after running over Schiffer and has to come from last to 10th and he's passed the champ in race two before the Frenchman leaps from right to left and takes them both out. Pourcel can get back on for third but Tommy is shaken up. He's

back on his feet in time to greet the Frenchman in the pit lane so Chris knows a few more English words he won't find in the dictionary now! KTM are just glad Tommy gets up.

The collision happens at the same jump where Tyla Rattray bites out on Saturday. Half the Orange Army are at Styla's side within a minute as he lays prostrate on the ground. In fact Everts, Beirer and Tyla's stepfather Wayne Lumgair get called before the jury in the evening charged with 'outside assistance'. They get away with a stern warning – next time they lose their passes. That'll teach them for worrying about one of their own! But Heinz Kinigadner can see the funny side that evening. "That's a good start. It took Jobe five GPs to get this far. Stefan hasn't even made it to the first race!"

Tyla gets up and we all breathe a sigh of relief but Pit is rightly adamant from his wheelchair. "I'm just glad he was wearing a neck brace. I don't know if it saved him but it didn't do any harm." Tommy's still not convinced. "They haven't proved it yet and, anyway, it makes you look a prat!"

And Tyla is the hero on Sunday with twice second to Tony C. "I owe that result to my physio Hugo. I was so stiff I couldn't even get out of bed this morning."

But Cairoli is the man. He doesn't even make the starts but calmly picks them off and knows he's sitting pretty. "Now Christophe has to catch points on me. I like it this way."

Completing the podium is Gareth Swanepoel who's sporting a grin from ear to ear. "Mike had been boarding me I needed to get Gundersen back so it was a complete surprise, a nice one though, when Foxy pulled me over to go to the podium. I pushed too hard to lead in the first race when I got the chance and I had nothing left at the end of race two. I'm still building again from my shoulder op and I can't explain how happy I am to get this first podium already. That gives me the confidence to race Cairoli, Pourcel and Tyla later in the year."

Shaun Simpson and Tom Church prove they have top 10 pace too but crashes and collisions steal the points. Last straw for TC comes when he gets green fencing in his rear wheel but he was not chuffed when they pull him in for riding with one arm ripped off his shirt. At first he thinks it's for indecent exposure but it's actually for lack of protective clothing. That makes him feel much better – after all a flimsy race shirt's going to make all the difference!



Christophe Pourcel



Josh Coppins



Tommy Searle



Antonio Cairoli



*Tony Cairoli wants his MX2 title back – and 1-1 at Valkenswaard is the best possible start*





### Sean's Shocked!

Hamblin gets to grips with Dutch sand...

"Man, we don't race nothing like this in the States. Even Southwick doesn't compare with this," reckons Swift Suzuki's Stateside signing Sean Hamblin. "The last time I rode anything like this was in the Californian desert when I was a kid and you didn't need stickers from the Environment Agency.

"I was hating it in practice and I was like 34th but racing was much better. You don't think about it anymore, just get on with racing. There are some guys out there who only seem to want

to ride one fast lap.

"I went down early in the first moto but was nearly back into the points until I ended up running out of track and aggravated a knee injury I've been carrying. I didn't start so good in the second moto – that is something I will have to practice this week – but I made some good passes stick and ended up 12th so at least I have my name on the scorecard. I would have liked more but it's a start and I look forward to pushing into the top 10 in Spain."



*MX1* madness! Josh Coppins (#6) goes up the middle flanked by Mike Brown (#4), David Philippaerts (#19), Billy Mac (#211) and Jonathan Barragan (#7)



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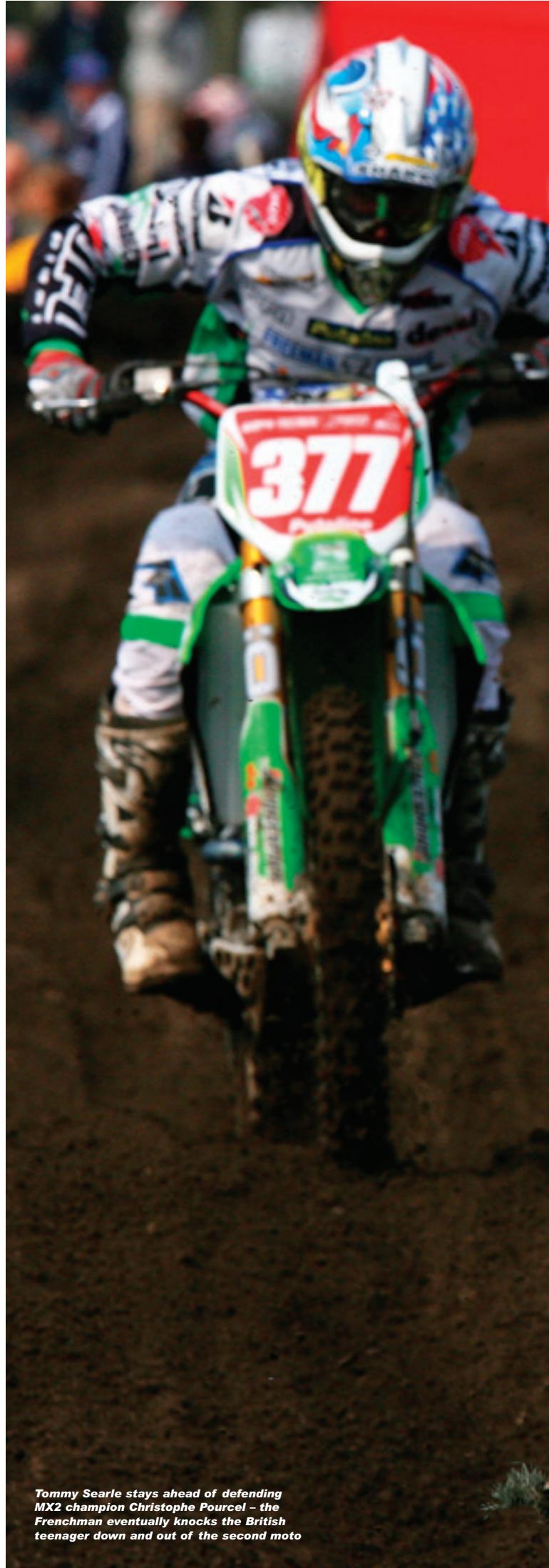
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Tommy Searle stays ahead of defending MX2 champion Christophe Pourcel – the Frenchman eventually knocks the British teenager down and out of the second moto



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## History Lesson...

*DT's ball-breaker!*

The return to Valkenswaard marks the 21st time that the Eurocircuit has hosted world championship motocross. Sylvain Geboers won his last GP there when it premiered in 1974, it was a permanent fixture on the calendar from 1989 to 2004 when Stefan Everts took his fifth win there and it was the scene of the first ever triple GP in Y2K.

But one of the most unforgettable experiences for regulars was the sight of Dave Thorpe – who had won a classic against Andre Malherbe on the way to his first world title in 1985 – quite literally getting the hump in 1990. That was the year DT took his #1 plate to Kawasaki and the men of GP motocross still raced two times 40+2 – but the Japanese designed their factory bikes for America where they were racing 10 minutes less and didn't race fuel-thirsty sand.

When Team Green did fuel tests on the Saturday the awful truth struck home that David's bike would run dry at 35 minutes and they didn't want to look silly by calling their icon in for a fuel stop. So they made him look silly by welding extra capacity to the tank! Not only silly but also extremely sore as David was smacking his pride and joy every time he slid forward to stick out his leg in a turn.

Race date that year was also April 1 as one paddock wit scrawled on the hump with felt pen in the pre-parc. And the irony of it all as Thorpe scraped just nine points and his b\*lls off the tank? The winner was Billy Liles on a production KX500 with a blown-out plastic tank!





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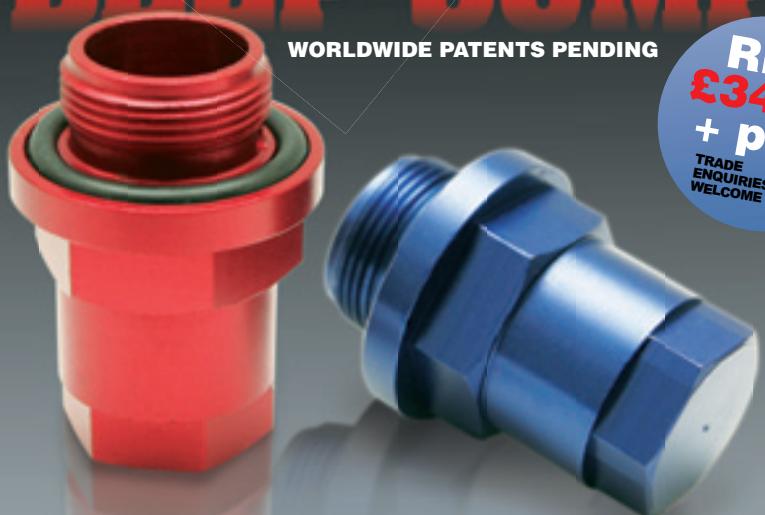
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## Results

### MX2

1	Antonio Cairoli	(De Carli Yamaha)	25+25=50
2	Tyla Rattray	(Red Bull KTM)	22+22=44
3	Gareth Swanepoel	(Molson Kawasaki)	20+15=35
4	Christophe Pourcel	(GPKR Kawasaki)	14+20=34
5	Erik Eggens	(Beuersfoort Suzuki)	16+18=34
6	Kenneth Gundersen	(Ricci Yamaha)	18+16=34
7	Nicolas Aubin	(Ricci Yamaha)	15+13=28
8	Marcus Schiffer	(Sarholz KTM)	13+14=27
9	Anthony Boissiere	(CLS Kawasaki)	10+12=22
10	Pascal Leuret	(NGS Honda)	12+10=22
13	Tommy Searle	(Red Bull KTM)	11+0+11
14	Sean Hamblin	(Swift Suzuki)	0+9=9
20	Martin Barr	(Bike It Dixon Yamaha)	0+5=5
23	Tom Church	(Molson Kawasaki)	3+0=3



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Gordon Crockard's fighting a streaming cold all weekend and is less than impressed with his 15th overall in the MX1 division

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Steve Ramon (#11) leads the way from Brownny and Coppins with De Dycker, Kevin Strijbos (#2) and Marc De Reuver (#14) chasing hard



## Results

### MX1

1	Josh Coppins	(Yamaha Rinaldi)	25+22=47
2	Jonathan Barragan	(Red Bull KTM)	16+25=41
3	Steve Ramon	(Suzuki Geboers)	22+15=37
4	Kevin Strijbos	(Suzuki Geboers)	18+18=36
5	Marc De Reuver	(Yamaha Rinaldi)	15+20=35
6	Ken De Dycker	(CAS Honda)	20+14=34
7	Max Nagl	(Sarholz KTM)	14+11=25
8	James Noble	(Multitek Honda)	11+13=24
9	Manuel Priem	(Factory TM)	3+16=19
10	Mike Brown	(CAS Honda)	7+12=19
14	Billy MacKenzie	(Motorex Kawasaki)	12+0=12
15	Gordon Crockard	(PAR Homes Honda)	0+10=10



# HOT PROSPECT!

In the rough, tough world of professional MX  
Livia Lancelot's mix of natural talent and  
model good looks is a unique selling point...

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

profile

*Livia raced the international at Valence but found it tough going*



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**LET'S FACE** it, motocross is a physical sport dripping in machismo – in short, it's a man's world. And it's precisely because of this we must show the greatest respect for the fast females who have achieved excellence on two wheels.

Livia Lancelot, third in last year's Women's World Cup and winner of the opening round, is indeed one of a rare breed. "Quite a lot of girls in France ride bikes for fun but there are only three or four of us in the whole of the country who actually race motocross in competition and then another three or four in enduro. So we don't have any races just for girls at all."

"Until the world cup started I had only ever raced against the guys but I have seen that if I work hard in my training I have the chance to be world champion and that is my incentive. I know a lot of the boys I raced against already lost interest in motocross when they became teenagers and I guess it could have been the same for me if it had not been for the Women's World Cup. That gave me something to go for, some goal to chase where I have a chance to win."

"I could never have a chance against the men. I have tried to qualify for the French Elite championship but they were much too fast for me and I could never qualify. I can qualify for the next level – the national class – but that is my limit."

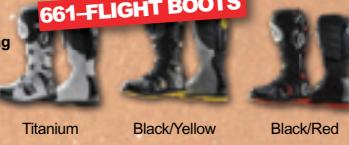
Livvy was born in St Denis, a northern

suburb of Paris, 19 years ago and now lives in Essone in the south of the city. So how did she get interested in motocross, a sport which is inevitably rural in its roots.

"My father likes motocross very much. He never raced but he had road bikes, trail bikes and he bought me a bike when I was four. I had never asked for a bike but I guess he had seen in my eyes that I too was fascinated. I started to race when I was six or seven and I won a few races locally when I was 10 or 11. But it was not so difficult at that age. Girls are often taller and stronger than the boys at that age but when you are a teenager the boys suddenly grow so fast and they quickly get stronger than the girls and that is so important in motocross."

"I can see this in my cousins – when we were small I was bigger than them but when we were in our teens they shot past me. Physical strength is important. When I crash or the bike starts to jump left, right, left I don't have the strength as a girl to hold it."

But even back in those early days Livvy had no chance in mixed competition once she ventured outside her district. "I actually raced against Sébastien and Christophe in minivert nationals but they were winning and I was about 20th. I won the national race at Valence last year but I know that some of the guys I could beat when we were 10 are now faster than me even though I have improved my standard of riding."

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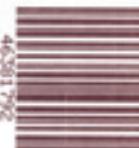
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Yamaha France were the first to recognise the marketing potential of supporting their country's fastest female racer, assisting Livvy for the last few years through the local dealer in Essone. Then last winter GPKR came knocking and now she is a fully fledged team-mate of les Freres Pourcel.

"I have known the Pourcel family as friends for many years having raced against them when we were younger and we spent a lot of time together at Teutschenthal and Uddevalla. Both Sébastien and Christophe gave me advice for the track and the race.

"Then last winter their father Roger approached me to ask me if I had a big contract with Yamaha because he was interested for me to join the GPKR team. And here I am. My plan this year is to race the Women's World Cup and the French nationals. I have raced twice in America but I will not go there this year. Perhaps next year when Christophe is there – maybe he can help me to get assistance over there.

"Roger Pourcel got me a ride in the international class at Valence this year but I had no chance. Those guys are so fast and the track was so muddy too. It was very difficult for me. But it was good experience. One week later I had a French championship in the national class and I was very relaxed and cool, not

nervous like I had been before. I qualified okay and managed to finish around 20th."

But it is the women's races which hold most attraction. "I think it is a pity though that we only have three races for the world cup. It would be much better if we had five or six races – last year when I crashed at Uddevalla I had no chance to pull back the points again."

But the 'extra' race this summer at the sandy hellhole they call Lierop does not create quite the same enthusiasm. "S\*\*\*! I prefer not to even think about it until we go there. I have a full physical training programme – I go to the gym, cycling, running, the same sort of programme as the guys but I don't do weights. I don't want to make myself into a muscle packet. I am a girl and I want to stay that way!"

"I think we girls have to accept that we are not really fast, not compared with the top guys anyway. So if we want people to be interested in us then we have to remain feminine."

And experience proves it! When Livvy walked into the press centre at Teutschenthal last year the clatter of the keyboards fell silent. While Kathi Prumm and Steffi Laier were presented in regimental green and orange gear, Livvy was dressed in Oxbow casual wear. In every sense this was also team gear but it was French, it had flair and an attractive girl like Livvy could carry it to perfection.

As we chatted in the GPKR hospitality at Valkenswaard she was totally honest. "I have to wear the same Kawasaki team gear as the guys here but I don't like it. We look like the guys and I don't think that it is good. We should be presenting ourselves differently. Last year I had the Oxbow clothing and tomorrow Freeman T Porter will bring casual wear not just for me but also the guys. I think it is important that we girls wear that sort of gear off the track."

It is a point not lost on Patrick Gelade, the G in GPKR, who admits straight out the marketing opportunity she brings. "We like Livvy and we are glad we can assist her but from a business point of view we saw her value in the promotion of Freeman T Porter who are one of our main sponsors."

For sure the fastest girls are not as quick as the best men – and never will be – but the series with girls like Livvy has brought a breath of fresh air to our sport.

"Yes, I am a professional motocrosser. But I think it is important to have a profession too. I have finished school now but I work at home studying on the internet for a diploma in marketing and I have big exams this summer."

But even in this serious moment, Livvy can be refreshingly French. "But I don't know where that will take me. I don't like to think too much about the future just yet. I am still only 19 and I prefer to live for today. And motocross is fun, oui?"

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Her MX-mad dad got Livvy into the sport





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profile



# TAKING AIM!

**Flying Dutchman Marc De Reuver's got his sights set on MX1 GP glory**

Words by Tom Jacobs Photos by Pixelpony

**WHEN IT** comes to motocross in the low countries, Belgium hugely outweighs the Netherlands in terms of talent and results but when it comes down to personality and charm the Dutch – and in particular Marc De Reuver – have got their act together.

While De Reuver has undeniable star quality and is a big hit with fans everywhere, so far he's not fulfilled the high hopes he created when he burst onto the scene in 2001 claiming his first ever podium at the Dutch GP in Valkenswaard. Several injuries – some even career threatening – have marred his GP campaigns from 2002 until 2005 but last year he was able to complete a full season injury-free, coming home fifth in MX2.

"In my mind I'm not holding back and I don't feel as if I have changed my riding style at all because of the injuries I have had," claims Marc. "When I'm on the bike I just want to race as hard as I can. That's all I think about. Although unconsciously it will have an effect. At least that's what my coach Johan Boonen tells me, he says my riding style is less on the limit."

"I also feel this is one of the big differences between me and guys like Christophe Pourcel or Tommy Searle. They are young and just pinning it everywhere because nothing major has happened to them yet. Previously I would have been in the top three all weekend long, during practice, qualifying and warm-up. Now I'm not that bothered anymore. Even fourth or fifth will do because only the race result matters." ▶



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Being a tall guy at 6ft 2ins, De Reuver has been in the smallest class for a surprisingly long time. Although his swap to MX1 was initially agreed with KTM for the 2006 season the Austrians decided to run Tortelli and Pichon instead. "For me it was very disappointing having to compete in MX2 again as I felt ready to go to MX1. I had my mind made up. Out of loyalty to KTM I actually preferred to step up with them. I already had an offer from Yamaha in 2005.

"Anyway, it feels good to be on a 450 in the end. Obviously it's a bike you have to treat with respect but the YZ450FM feels very light and it gives you a lot of confidence. Being able to work with the Rinaldi team is a huge advantage. They work very hard for their riders and they know what it takes. It's like all the pieces of the

puzzle are falling in place so making the step to MX1 won't be hard – it's a natural evolution. I know it will suit me and I'm already acquainted with most of the competitors except for Coppins but it was easy to get to know him since we are on the same team!

"Josh is a cool guy, he has so much determination and willpower. As a person he's more introverted than me but that's okay. Coppins is clearly hired to go after the world title with Yamaha and that takes a little bit of the heat away for me."

Entering his seventh GP season, the double Dutch champion almost talks like a veteran when he evaluates his years at the highest level so far. "A lot has changed actually. When you compare MX2 racing with how it was when I came up, you can't hide the fact that it was

much easier back then.

"The level is a lot higher now, you just have to look at the number of riders able to win a GP. With the competition being more fierce it's extremely difficult for a big bloke like me to take on tiny guys like Cairoli. I weigh 83 kilos and they are around 65 or 70.

"I don't want to make an excuse but it forces you to ride extremely precisely and not to make any mistakes. For that reason alone MX1 should be better. Also, the tracks have changed a great deal over the years – in some ways they are more technical in others they are less technical."

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## The boss man talketh

**Carlo Rinaldi on Marc...**

"There's no doubt Marc is a very talented rider," reckons Carlo. "His racing is inspired by instinct – just as he is in everyday life. To get to the next level he needs to be more focused on the result, the long-term result even. I think that is what sets apart good riders from champions."

"Already I feel he is maturing and making changes from when he joined us. For this year top four would be a good result, he has the speed but we all know he needs consistency. When he doesn't feel so good he still needs to push and get the points. It's not all about winning or losing. I have asked Marc to take more control."

"De Reuver shares some similarities with John Van Den Berk I think. They are both very excitable and being Dutch they talk a lot! However, John was very methodical, that's probably the biggest difference. Yamaha really believes in De Reuver's potential and that's why he has a two-year contract with us."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



but compared to them he's a lousy jumper! I think these are exciting times for motocross because now you have all these younger riders starting to come over to MX1."

De Reuver is widely regarded as one of the best sand riders in the world. He has won GPs in the sand and he pushed the Dutch team to second during the 2004 MX des Nations at home in Lierop. On one hand the master of sand feels the noble art is no longer what it used to be but on the other hand it's no longer the only trick up his sleeve.

"With more man-made obstacles being put into place in sand tracks it becomes easier to get the right timing. Guys like Pourcel and Cairoli have developed a good feeling for the sand itself but reading the natural bumps remains the hardest part. When these are

replaced by artificial bumps the advantage of typical sand riders is almost being taken away.

"Luckily I'm not just a sand man like so many other Dutch riders. I feel I have made headway in many ways. I find it easier to control myself during a race and to work out a race strategy so I can push until the end. Unfortunately, as you get older you find out things don't come as easy as they did. I barely used to train, nor did I watch what or when I ate. All that's well monitored now and I still have the same intensity that I used to have when I'm on the bike. When I walk away from it after a race I'm still full of adrenaline and you can't strike up a normal conversation with me for the first 15 minutes or so! That's how much I get into it."

Never afraid to express his opinion, De Reuver is a welcome, fresh breeze in an

environment that's becoming more and more corporately correct. At least you know when 'Calimero' is around there won't be a dull moment. When he was asked in a press conference how he would adapt from the easy-going way of Johan Boonen to the more Spartan approach of the Rinaldis he raised a few laughs. "Yeah, well maybe that's what I need you know. A bit more mob style will do me good – I'm looking forward to it!"

Another classic De Reuver example came when he verbally thrashed American big mouth Mike Alessi in the Irish GP post-race press conference in 2005. Marc had won the first race and he wasn't afraid to let the world know. "I don't use words on purpose to 'dis' people or as a way of psychological warfare. When I'm asked to I'll give my opinion, that's it."

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Actually, I don't think I ever crossed the line because I have never been summoned by KTM nor has Yamaha told me what to or not to do."

One thing that Yamaha would ask of Marc is a little more on-track consistency. "I have to be more consistent this season. That is my number one goal but in general I will be happy if I make the top five overall. At times it drives me crazy myself and I don't know why things are not working out the way I want. I still can not believe how bad my riding was in England and during the Dutch GP. Especially at home, I think I was too focused and put too much pressure on myself."

"Some races were good though and I won the Bulgarian GP but that was not enough. However, I feel lucky to have Billy MacKenzie

around in MX1 – he makes me look a little better because he's even more inconsistent!"

At his own request KTM put a clause in Marc's contract – the possibility to move Stateside with them for 2003. "I don't know how that came across but unlike other riders I'm absolutely not attracted to the American way of life or even American motocross in particular. To be honest I was just interested in the money! I have closed the American route for good now. They have some great riders but others are hugely overpaid. Take Josh Hansen for instance, outdoors he wouldn't even run with the top guys in the Flemish Amateur League!"

While injuries stopped Marc from going Stateside, an American connection does remain as De Reuver is represented by the American talent agency Wasserman Media Group. Jamie

Dobb and Bob Moore are working closely with him. "It's good to have those kind of people around you. Take Bob, he's not just a manager, he knows what happens and he knows how a rider feels and what he needs – I'm really happy to working with them."

On the business side of the sport De Reuver states things are going good. "When they decided not to pay prize or start money any longer it was a big blow to the privateer riders. Personally it's never been an issue for me because I was a factory rider. I think that discussion is closed now."

"Youthstream is doing a good job in promoting motocross and we have quite a lot of media attention. Obviously everyone would like to earn more money but you have to face the fact that there's not enough money"



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"Also, I can't see why some riders absolutely want to compete in GPs when they are not making any money. I know I wouldn't! If I can't earn a decent living riding motocross I would get a job and ride motocross on the side in the Flemish Amateur League – I would party in the tent on Saturday night, have fun and still earn some money."

It's 14 years since Pedro Tragter won the 125 title in 1993 – the last time Holland had a motocross world champion. After being spoiled with legends like John Van Den Berk and Dave Strijbos the dry spell is hard for the Dutch fans. Erik Eggens managed third in 2001 but all hopes are now turned to De Reuver.

While Marc hails from Amstelveen near

Amsterdam his local community is about as motocross minded as London's Notting Hill. Luckily, most of the time he lives in Lommel – the heartland of European motocross with riders like Antonio Cairoli and David Philippaerts literally living down the road.

"If it wasn't for the sport I wouldn't live here because it's not a very happening place. Still, for a professional motocross rider it's perfect. I remember my first race in Belgium and how nervous I was. I couldn't believe how passionate people were about motocross – waving flags and blowing air horns, hanging out in the beer tent. I like all of that."

"Most Dutch fans are too grounded. They prefer to stand next to the track criticising who is not performing!"

Whether fans are striking up a chat or

asking for an autograph, Marc is one of the most approachable riders in the paddock. Even in cyberspace he's not afraid to mix things up on popular message boards like the American Motonews or Belgium's Mxworld. Unlike most of the visitors he does so under his own name.

"I don't like the back-stabbing and people just talking trash behind my back. If you have something against me just throw it in my face – I can handle it."

"Often people just come out with the biggest nonsense – I know not all is to be taken seriously but I want to put the record straight. One of the funniest myths around is that factory riders don't have to pay a penny... So when I go to practice I fill my van up with water and when accidentally I do have to pay something I give them a Yamaha cap! Right?"

# '78 SPECIAL!

With TMX celebrating its 30th birthday this year it's time for Jack to look back on his early days riding with Sheriff Bill's posse...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle





JACK BURNICLE is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera. After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...

DESCRIPTION SIGNALMENT	
Barer / Title	★Wife <i>Femme</i>
Occupation <i>Graphic Designer</i>	
Profession <i>Photographer</i>	
Place of birth <i>Billingham</i>	
Leave in case of emergency <i>Billingham</i>	
Date of birth <i>9/3/47</i>	
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**OUR SISTER** publication Trials and Motocross News is 30 years old this year.

Founding father 'Sheriff Bill' Lawless – dad of DBR editor Sean – launched the paper back in 1977. At that time national weeklies 'Motor Cycle News' and the now defunct 'Motor Cycle Weekly' both carried comprehensive coverage of our off-road sport (yes, I know, hard to believe now!). So it was a bold move...

I spent my first two seasons on the grand prix trail picking up bits and pieces from those mainstream 'comics' by focusing on 125 and 250cc world championships. Their own motocross correspondents dealt with the 500s.

Then in 1978 someone pointed out that a barry Irishman called Bruce Thompson, who worked for Suzuki as reigning 125 world champion Gaston Rahier's mechanic, wrote a weekly column for this new newspaper – aka TMX – entitled 'Diary of a GP Mechanic'.

I contacted Sheriff Bill.

How about illustrating Bruce's pages with my photographs? A bearded, combative bloke, Bill gruffly agreed. It was the start of a long, sometimes rewarding and frequently tempestuous relationship!

I'd planned another mix of 125 and 250 GPs, the latter with the generous assistance of continental travellers Rob Hooper and Pete Mathia and the former with Math's Beamish Suzuki team-mate Roger Harvey and Team Green's Geoff Mayes. So, pumped with the prospect of shooting for 'TMX', I headed to round three of the 125s.

This was the Belgian GP at Lanklaar, situated deep in the province of Limbourg, inches from the Dutch border. I floated over to Ostend by ferry,

somewhat traversed the country and eventually caught a rickety bus the final few miles from Hasselt. The affable driver of this mechanical relic detoured to drop me at the entrance of the track. Even more remarkably, his amiable passengers happily acquiesced!

I found 'Harv's' trusty Transit van – my essential accommodation for the weekend – and took a look around. Lanklaar was a circuit like no other. A high ridge ran through the centre, separating a regular agricultural field on one side from the deepest, softest, whitest sand I'd ever seen on the other! Harv hated that half but the Belgians, Finns and Dutch ace Gerard Rond, on his screaming water-cooled Yamaha, loved it!

'Rondo', lapping faster than the Belgian 500cc national championship support act, won both motos ahead of Rahier's Suzuki. This hoisted him a point past Gaston's Japanese team-mate Akira Watanabe to second in the series, despite Akira twice bravely beating Andre Massant (now boss of the Chinese Shineray Honda GP team).

Geoff Mayes finished a fine eighth in race one with Harvey 12th in race two. And the following Friday's TMX, dated April 28, carried three of my photos for the first time in 'Diary of a GP Mechanic' although, dismally, without a byline.

Three weeks later the Dutch round outside Gerard Rond's home town of Apeldoorn produced another double for the dashing Dutchman and with poor Gaston forced out of race two by a severe misfire Rondo hijacked

the title lead. This time the May 5 issue of TMX carried five photographs and, yes, a sweet, small credit – 'Pictures JACK BURNICLE'. Only a smudger can tell you how much those three little words mean!

Long train journeys carried me to the next round at Vesoul, an awesome amphitheatre near the French Alps. There Rondo, saddled with Japan's unlucky number '42', suffered a broken steering head in race one as Gaston won both motos from Watanabe. Brit duo Harvey and Mayes, scrapping for sixth place, were wiped out by a Belgian backmarker 400 yards from the flag.

Geoff bust his wrist in the pile-up and headed for home. Perched precariously on a canvas chair in the back of his Team Green truck that night I tried to write my MCN story, despite the demonic driving of 17-year-old rookie mechanic Colin Wright. Eventually,



thrown around like a leaf in a gale, I threw up in the washing up bowl!

Four weeks later I drove my 1966 Triumph Vitesse drophead all the way east from Boulogne across to Laubus Esbach, north of Frankfurt in West Germany, for round seven. But I got lost and was pulled up by two German cops in a Porsche. "Follow us," they insisted. There ensued the most terrifying white-knuckle ride of my entire life as they shrieked along sinuous country roads with me trying desperately to stay in their mirror.

Fabulous, frantic action round a fabulous, fast circuit saw Rondo take on the factory Suzukis in a breathtaking duel that ended after 30 minutes with his engine fried. First corner calamities ensnared Harvey but he twice burst gleefully through into the top 10 with late passes on Italian teenies Corrado Maddii and Michele Rinaudi. The following Friday TMX, dated June 2, carried my first – albeit small – cover photograph. It depicted overall winner Watanabe reading a copy of the paper!

A week later I flew – for the first time! – to the Swiss GP. Meyrin lay close to Geneva airport. Flat, baked hard and peppered with fast, ramped jumps, it proved disastrous this time for Rahier whose chain derailed six minutes from the end of race one. With Rond and Watanabe trading wins they were all back in contention. And after a first race puncture, Harv claimed seventh second time out.

Within a week I was back north of Frankfurt for my first 250 GP of the year at Beuerne, a slick blue-groove scorching where Hans Maisch

– son of the Maico boss – beat Torleif Hansen, Harry Everts and our own Neil Hudson who duly featured as the lower half of a two-tier TMX cover!

Rob Hooper, who had the most beautiful metallic blue Transit, was also blisteringly fast but made late mistakes that dropped him just outside that vital points-scoring top 10 after great scraps with Everts, Hakan Carlqvist and Russia's former vice-champ Vladimir Kavinov.

And my first double page spread in TMX made me feel like a proper, grown-up journo!

On the first weekend of July I joined Pete Mathia in his big rumbling 508D Merc for the journey down to Ahun and the French 250GP in a dangerous, dusty valley. The water bowser cartwheeled downhill during Saturday practice, miraculously missing everyone. Math and Hoop were both caught up in first lap pile-ups, the second race mayhem caused by Hansen. But

while Torleif retired, Rob rampaged from last to ninth. If the blond Swede had half Hooper's determination he'd have become the world champion he should never been but never was.

Nellie stormed to joint second overall with eventual champ Gennady Moiseev behind KTM's double race winner Kavinov. This time I got a spread in MCN (they always adored British success!) and, despite Farleigh Castle's 500GP the same weekend, a three-page bonanza in TMX including an extra back page to

accommodate 10 photographs and my ludicrously expansive prose!

I followed those 125 GPs to their gripping finale at Strijbo, in Czechoslovakia, a 15-hour drive in the Harvey Transit. There, at a coruscating circuit that leapt back and forth across a roadway, a cocky Rond stayed up late sipping red wine at Saturday's bustling party in the local town hall before winning the first moto the next day.

It wasn't enough! Watanabe's careful third sealed a wonderful championship while Harv's best ride of the year, in fifth ahead of renowned local hero Jiri Churavy (CZ), evaporated 10 minutes from the flag with a rear flat.

Race two and early leader Rond began to suffer! Gaston took advantage, Churavy thrilled the vast crowd by chasing him hard all the way and Watanabe grabbed third from an exhausted Rond three laps from the finish to ensure a Suzuki one-two in the table by a single point. 'Diary of a GP Mechanic' ran to three excited pages!

A month later 1978 was crowned with my first full-on TMX front page, ironically featuring Harvey – now on a Hewitt Maico – leading the Midlands to victory in the Inter-Centre Team Scramble at Lyng.

I remained a major contributor for 10 years. Even today Steve Shuttleworth regularly rakes up my pictures for his twinshock quiz.

TMX have celebrated their 30th birthday by axing me from their mailing list so I see our sister paper no more. But it was great fun while it lasted!





# MAXXIS METAL!

**Geoff turns pit pest to check out the British championship weapons of choice...**

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by still-mx.co.uk

THE '07 MX season is upon us and the teams on the British scene have stepped things up a notch from last year. The level of development and investment in our sport is amazing and the behind-the-scenes staff of the teams – from the smaller outfits to the factory supported set-ups – are deserving of high praise and respect.

Things really are good in our national series and they will only get better with the teams demanding professionalism from everyone involved in the sport – that's from organisers through to staff and riders.

Of course, the aforementioned riders all

need bikes and this year some of the bikes are really worth checking out. At round one of the championship I had an hour before first practice to gather a collection of bikes from around the pits to shoot. These bikes are the result of months of testing and hard work through the off-season.

The teams have to put together their packages using what they class as the best possible products for success. In this month's WW we are taking a trip into the hard parts and products which make the team bikes work to their optimum on the track.

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<b>Engine:</b>	Rinaldi factory	<b>Plastics:</b>	Polisport
<b>Suspension:</b>	Ohlins factory	<b>Clamps:</b>	Ohlins
<b>Wheels:</b>	Talon	<b>Other:</b>	NGK plugs, Venhill cables, Pro Carbon guards, Langcourt plating
<b>Exhaust:</b>	Arrow		
<b>Air filter:</b>	Twin Air		
<b>Handlebars:</b>	Renthal		
<b>Sprockets:</b>	Renthal		



## Fork Rent Suzuki

<b>Oil:</b>	Motul
<b>Tyres:</b>	Michelin
<b>Engine:</b>	MVRD in-house tuning/Hinson clutch parts
<b>Suspension:</b>	Showa MVRD in-house tuning/Eibach springs
<b>Wheels:</b>	SM Pro rims
<b>Exhaust:</b>	DEP
<b>Air filter:</b>	Twin Air
<b>Handlebars:</b>	Renthal
<b>Sprockets:</b>	Renthal
<b>Chain:</b>	DC Chain
<b>Brakes:</b>	Moto Master
<b>Plastics:</b>	WRP
<b>Clamps:</b>	Pulse
<b>Levers:</b>	Works Connection
<b>Other:</b>	Samco rad hoses, NGK plugs, Zero Nine Graphics



## Wulfsport Kawasaki

<b>Oil:</b>	Panolin
<b>Tyres:</b>	Bridgestone
<b>Engine:</b>	Modified STD/1.
<b>Suspension:</b>	Vertex piston Showa Kit
<b>Wheels:</b>	Haan
<b>Exhaust:</b>	HGS
<b>Air filter:</b>	Twin Air
<b>Handlebars:</b>	Renthal
<b>Sprockets:</b>	Renthal
<b>Chain:</b>	CZ Chain
<b>Brakes:</b>	Moto Master
<b>Plastics:</b>	UFO
<b>Clamps:</b>	STD
<b>Levers:</b>	STD
<b>Other:</b>	Pro Clean



## Pioneer Yamaha

<b>Oil:</b>	Silkolene
<b>Tyres:</b>	Pirelli
<b>Engine:</b>	RTS Racing
<b>Suspension:</b>	Bud
<b>Wheels:</b>	Multitek race wheels
<b>Exhaust:</b>	DEP
<b>Air filter:</b>	Finna Filters
<b>Handlebars:</b>	Renthal
<b>Sprockets:</b>	Renthal
<b>Chain:</b>	Regina
<b>Brakes:</b>	Carbone Lorraine
<b>Plastics:</b>	MBO Race Parts
<b>Clamps:</b>	STD
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<b>Engine:</b>	Full factory	<b>Plastics:</b>	WRP
<b>Suspension:</b>	WP full factory	<b>Clamps:</b>	Factory billet
<b>Exhaust:</b>	Akrapovic	<b>Levers:</b>	STD
<b>Air filter:</b>	Twin Air	<b>Other:</b>	Pro Carbon guards
<b>Handlebars:</b>	Renthal		
<b>Sprockets:</b>	Renthal		



**Molson Kawasaki**

<b>Oil:</b>	Motorex
<b>Tyres:</b>	Michelin
<b>Engine:</b>	In-house development
<b>Suspension:</b>	Factory KYB
<b>Wheels:</b>	Factory/Haan
<b>Exhaust:</b>	Akrapovic
<b>Air filter:</b>	Twin Air
<b>Handlebars:</b>	Renthal
<b>Sprockets:</b>	Renthal
<b>Chain:</b>	DID
<b>Brakes:</b>	DP Brakes/Moto Master
<b>Clamps:</b>	3D
<b>Levers:</b>	Sunline ARC
<b>Other:</b>	Light Speed, various titanium, 3D start device and filler caps



**Relentless Suzuki**

<b>Oil:</b>	Castrol
<b>Tyres:</b>	Maxxis
<b>Engine:</b>	Modified stock/ Boyesen parts/ Langcourt
<b>Wheels:</b>	coatings
<b>Suspension:</b>	K Tech modified stock
<b>Wheels:</b>	Excel wheelsets
<b>Exhaust:</b>	DEP
<b>Air filter:</b>	Twin Air
<b>Handlebars:</b>	Pro Taper
<b>Sprockets:</b>	Apcu Products
<b>Chain:</b>	DID
<b>Plastics:</b>	Polisport
<b>Other:</b>	Venhill cables and hoses, Pro Clean



**CAS Honda**

<b>Oil:</b>	Silkolene
<b>Tyres:</b>	Pirelli
<b>Engine:</b>	In-house developed
<b>Wheels:</b>	HRC factory parts/ Hinson clutch
<b>Suspension:</b>	Factory KYB 37
<b>Wheels:</b>	HRC
<b>Exhaust:</b>	Leo Vince
<b>Air filter:</b>	Twin Air
<b>Handlebars:</b>	Renthal
<b>Sprockets:</b>	Renthal
<b>Chain:</b>	Tsukabi
<b>Brakes:</b>	DP Brakes
<b>Plastics:</b>	Acerbis
<b>Clamps:</b>	RG3
<b>Levers:</b>	Works Connection
<b>Other:</b>	Carbon fibre subframe, Pulse various parts



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<b>Tyres:</b>	Michelin	<b>Brakes:</b>	Armstrong Discs
<b>Engine:</b>	Rinaldi factory	<b>Plastics:</b>	Polisport
<b>Suspension:</b>	Ohlins factory	<b>Clamps:</b>	Ohlins
<b>Wheels:</b>	Talon	<b>Other:</b>	NGK plugs, Venhill cables, Pro Carbon guards, Langcourt plating
<b>Exhaust:</b>	Arrow		
<b>Air filter:</b>	Twin Air		
<b>Handlebars:</b>	Renthal		
<b>Sprockets:</b>	Renthal		



**Twisted 7 Kawasaki**

<b>Oil:</b>	Motorex
<b>Tyres:</b>	Maxxis
<b>Engine:</b>	Modified STD/Hot Cams
<b>Suspension:</b>	WP rear shock/mod STD forks/Full Travel
<b>Wheels:</b>	Talon
<b>Exhaust:</b>	DEP
<b>Air filter:</b>	No Toil
<b>Handlebars:</b>	Renthal
<b>Sprockets:</b>	Renthal
<b>Chain:</b>	DID
<b>Brakes:</b>	SBS pads/Braking discs
<b>Plastics:</b>	Cycra
<b>Clamps:</b>	Pulse
<b>Levers:</b>	DRC hardware
<b>Other:</b>	Olkom graphics, NGK plugs, Powerpegs, Engine ice, SFS hoses



**PAR Homes Honda**

<b>Oil:</b>	Rock Oil
<b>Tyres:</b>	Bridgestone
<b>Engine:</b>	SC1 engines
<b>Suspension:</b>	Showa 'A' Kit
<b>Wheels:</b>	Talon
<b>Exhaust:</b>	Leo Vince
<b>Air filter:</b>	Twin Air
<b>Handlebars:</b>	Renthal
<b>Sprockets:</b>	Renthal
<b>Brakes:</b>	Moto Master
<b>Plastics:</b>	UFO
<b>Clamps:</b>	RG3
<b>Levers:</b>	Sunline ARC
<b>Other:</b>	WRP products, NGK plugs, GMX radiators, Venhill cables



**Swift Suzuki**

<b>Oil:</b>	Shell Oil
<b>Tyres:</b>	Michelin
<b>Engine:</b>	Ekuire M/C Development and in-house work!
<b>Suspension:</b>	Showa 'A' Kit
<b>Wheels:</b>	Talon
<b>Exhaust:</b>	Akrapovic
<b>Air filter:</b>	Multi Air
<b>Handlebars:</b>	Renthal
<b>Sprockets:</b>	Talon
<b>Chain:</b>	RK Chain
<b>Brakes:</b>	Braking
<b>Clamps:</b>	Factory
<b>Levers:</b>	Works Connection
<b>Other:</b>	GMX radiators, Light Speed guards, Hammerhead shifters, Danger UK graphics

# THINK FAST!

**So what's the difference between champions and the rest of us also-rans? Our resident sports mind coach has the answer...**

Words by Neil Drew

**THIS IS** the second in our series of articles devoted to sports performance mind coaching. In this article we will help you to understand a few of the many things that make a champion and show you how you can start to understand yourself and improve your performance. And don't worry if any of this seems alien, it's only because it's something you've never thought about before.

Are champions a natural phenomena? I often ask this question to riders I work with to find out how they view champions or the top one per cent of riders. It's really interesting because the answers mostly share the same theme – that the top riders have something 'special', a 'gift'. And the truth is they do have something 'special', a 'gift' – and it is, as usual, a complicated explanation. So to keep things real simple I will explain it like this – champions think differently.

Yes, that's all it is, they think differently to everybody else. Ask one of these top one per cent of riders and you will get a different explanation because most of the time they themselves don't really fully understand how it is that they can do so well. The ways in which they think differently are vast – some say that it's mental toughness alone but it isn't, it's far more than that.

Let's look at the basics. Firstly, the top riders have a focus and commitment that's totally dedicated to their sport and they usually think about their sport all the time. Now you could argue that an amateur who wants to do well will think about his or her sport for the same amount of time but the difference is in the way they do it. The top riders will think about where they want to be, how they are going to get there, they will have goals and plans and strategies in place, they will constantly be looking for ways to improve. The other 99 per cent of riders will mainly be thinking about things they don't want to happen – crashes, bad starts etc – and they will remember all the bad things that happened at any given event or on any particular part of a track.

When they think about racing the top riders will look at a track and focus on where they are going to be more than where they don't want to

be. The 99 per centers will be thinking about where they don't want to end up – the parts where they don't feel confident.

When a top rider looks at an obstacle or challenge they will look at ways of overcoming it, the others will be looking at it and wondering what will happen and probably have images of how it will all go wrong. In short, they will rehearse in their minds how it is they are going to fail.

I have heard some refer to competition as a series of continuous problems that have to be overcome – this attitude is just setting yourself up for failure, seeing everything as being bad and difficult. This creates anxiety, fear and a negative attitude and isn't the way that any top competitor views things.

At the next level of thinking there are beliefs. The top one per cent will have a belief in themselves, they will be focused on being the best – they won't be thinking about excuses. I have worked with some really talented guys who were at the top end of the sport just outside the one per cent. They wanted to be champions but had failed and after working with them for a few hours we nearly always uncovered at least one area where they were focusing on what could go wrong or had negative emotions, thoughts and images about some aspect of their competition.

Sometimes negative influences from their team or family had caused them to have doubts about themselves and their abilities. Countering these beliefs can help in many ways with confidence, commitment, consistency and mental toughness, allowing them to be able to access total flow more easily and readily.

Then we get deeper into the mind and come to what's called 'emotional intelligence'. The top one per cent have an ability to identify specific emotions they are feeling very accurately and they also possess the ability to change or utilize them – mostly they don't even know that they are doing it, it's become wired into their neurology. Think about it for a minute. These guys that I keep referring to as the one per cent – they appear relaxed, confident, they walk tall and they are usually fairly quiet (at an event) but when they get on their bikes they look like

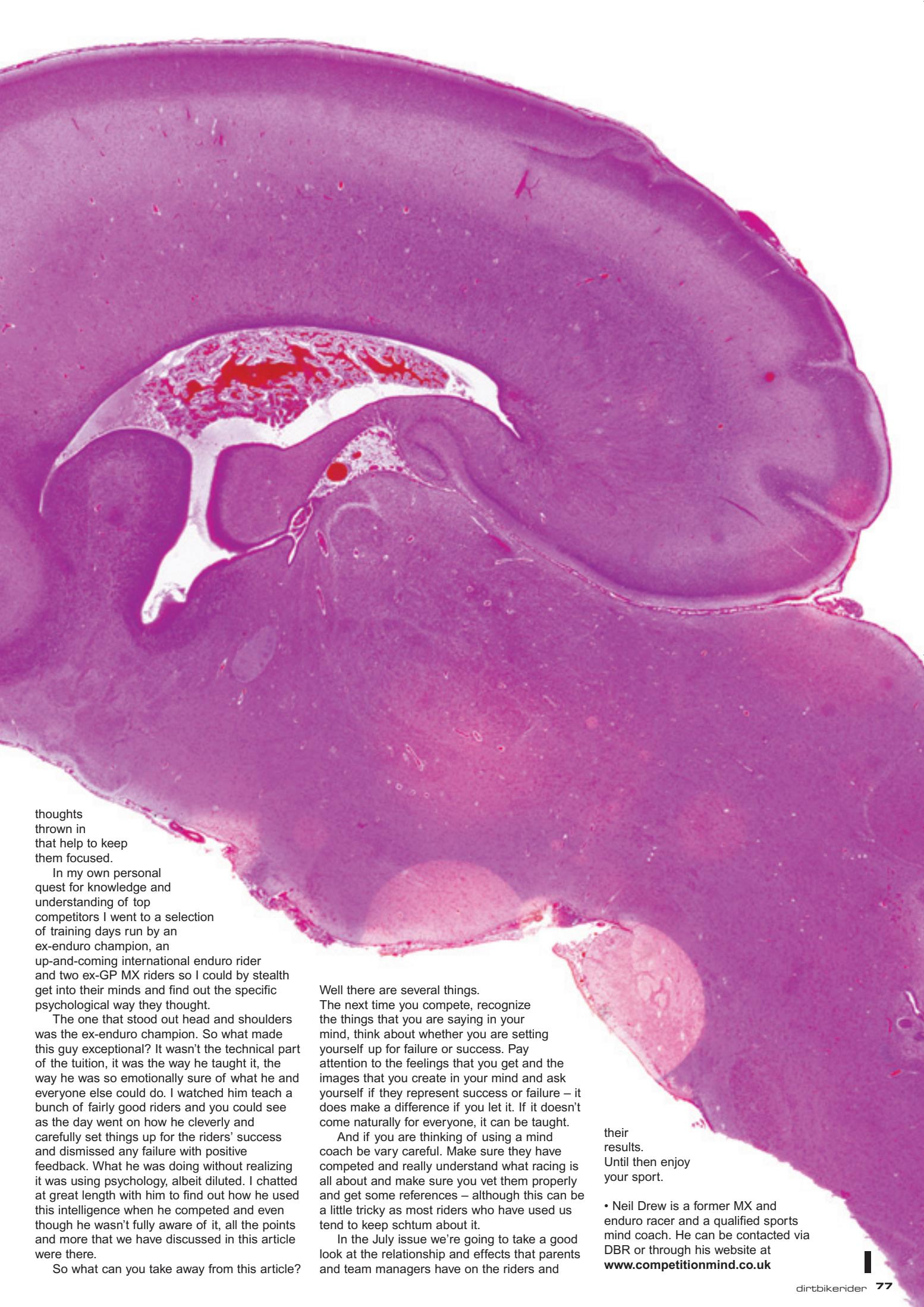
they mean business. They also ride with fluency – the moment that they start they are able to get into total flow.

Now think about your middle-of-the-road rider or even yourself at whatever level you ride at. You will most likely agree that it might take you a lap or two or a couple of sections before you get into any kind of rhythm or you might not even be able to find the rhythm and flow at all. Nerves will often get the better of you, often there is fear and heightened anxiety, you will probably be looking at other competitors and thinking about how they are going to do and allow yourself to focus on everything else except you. You might even be the loudest one in the paddock – laughing and joking to mask your feelings. The reason that you do this is because you haven't learned the same level of emotional intelligence and control the top competitors have. We all possess the ability to have emotional intelligence. Usually it has to be taught although sometimes you can stumble upon how to use this intelligence, then it all just clicks into place.

Think of the first time you went on a rollercoaster. Remember that first climb to the top and those feelings of nerves, anxiety and even fear. Really remember it, go back to that time, remember tipping over the top curve and the intense emotions... Now think how you felt afterwards – you probably wanted to get up and have another go but notice how the emotions changed with more excitement, more happiness in the anticipation, also notice how you were thinking differently with more motivation.

This is the best parallel that I can think of. Every champion I've ever met has been through this emotional switch over and knows how to use it – some didn't even realize that they were using it. Some just practised and practised and learnt it gradually without realizing it. Sure, they still have nerves and anxiety but it's controlled and there are other more positive emotions and





thoughts  
thrown in  
that help to keep  
them focused.

In my own personal quest for knowledge and understanding of top competitors I went to a selection of training days run by an ex-enduro champion, an up-and-coming international enduro rider and two ex-GP MX riders so I could by stealth get into their minds and find out the specific psychological way they thought.

The one that stood out head and shoulders was the ex-enduro champion. So what made this guy exceptional? It wasn't the technical part of the tuition, it was the way he taught it, the way he was so emotionally sure of what he and everyone else could do. I watched him teach a bunch of fairly good riders and you could see as the day went on how he cleverly and carefully set things up for the riders' success and dismissed any failure with positive feedback. What he was doing without realizing it was using psychology, albeit diluted. I chatted at great length with him to find out how he used this intelligence when he competed and even though he wasn't fully aware of it, all the points and more that we have discussed in this article were there.

So what can you take away from this article?

Well there are several things. The next time you compete, recognize the things that you are saying in your mind, think about whether you are setting yourself up for failure or success. Pay attention to the feelings that you get and the images that you create in your mind and ask yourself if they represent success or failure – it does make a difference if you let it. If it doesn't come naturally for everyone, it can be taught.

And if you are thinking of using a mind coach be very careful. Make sure they have competed and really understand what racing is all about and make sure you vet them properly and get some references – although this can be a little tricky as most riders who have used us tend to keep schtum about it.

In the July issue we're going to take a good look at the relationship and effects that parents and team managers have on the riders and

their results.  
Until then enjoy your sport.

• Neil Drew is a former MX and enduro racer and a qualified sports mind coach. He can be contacted via DBR or through his website at [www.competitionmind.co.uk](http://www.competitionmind.co.uk)



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# MR MATURE!

**It's a long journey from New Zealand to America via Europe and Ben Townley's done a lot of growing up along the way...**

It's not uncommon in today's AMA MX/SX series to find that the most mature and most driven riders come from the GPs. Grant Langston is a good example of this, as is Ben Townley. Like Langston, Ben grew up outside of Europe, travelled there, won, then moved to the USA to race.

BT grew up in New Zealand – not exactly a hotbed of world motocross – and started riding at six years old. “The guy that runs New Zealand’s biggest motorcycle magazine – it’s off-road and on-road – called Kiwi Rider, him and my dad grew up together and went to school together and were best friends and he told dad one Christmas to get me a bike.”

It’s not that uncommon anymore for riders to start at such a young age in New Zealand but it wasn’t nearly as serious when BT was a kid as it is now. “I mean, mini motocross, like 50s and 60s, it’s really strong [today]. It’s actually real competitive. Not when I was there, though. When I was there, everyone just went out for a laugh. But it’s real competitive these days. It starts from six and then we have really strong mini motocross and junior

motocross [80s and 125s up until 16].

“But then in New Zealand it’s hard to carry on with racing after that. A lot of the guys I grew up with aren’t racing as serious these days because it’s not like over here. You can’t go to races and make contingency. There is no contingency. You just race for the love of it. That’s what I loved and hated about New Zealand. When I go back, that’s what racing’s about. It’s just fun. But you can’t race professionally there or do anything so that’s why I had to make the move.”

When Ben got over to Europe he was in for a shock. “I didn’t have a clue what I was in for, honestly. I went there and I was just a kid in Lolly Land, really. The first race I went to, I didn’t know anyone. I’d never expected to go to Europe. I never really knew who anyone was. You could’ve mentioned Joel [Smets] and Stefan [Everts] and it would’ve taken me time to realize but if you mentioned [Jeremy] McGrath it would’ve been like a lightswitch. Going to Europe wasn’t the path I expected but I’m definitely so, so glad I went.”

Having lived in Europe for a few years, it helped him

learn to live within different cultures which certainly didn’t hurt when he finally did make the move to America. “I think even if I’d come here [to the USA] from the beginning I still would’ve been the same person I am today. I still would’ve turned into the same racer and maybe I would’ve even done better in the States by now. But going to Europe was something that I didn’t expect to do, so everything that I had over there is really just all a bonus. I wouldn’t change it at all.”

“I don’t have any regrets in my life and going there was just an awesome experience – the cultures and the different ways of life with the food and language and stuff like that. It just really broadens your mind when you’re 16 years old. Especially going on my own. My mom and dad still had to keep working at home so I was on my own and you learn quickly – good and bad!”

Now 22 years old, Townley has been around for a while. He’s no spring chicken. Like many riders who come from the GPs rather than from American amateur racing, Townley seems to be much more comfortable in his own skin than many of his counterparts.



Steve Cox is an American moto-journalist who follows the entire AMA SX/MX tour. Since moving on from US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing and last year launched a new bi-weekly MX magazine – Motocross Illustrated – covering both AMA and GP action. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene...

# BEN TOWNLEY

"I don't want this to come across in a bad way but a bunch of the young amateur kids out there, when we go out to practice they all just race off – they just rip, s\*\*t and bust, we say. Then you see the older, more experienced guys, they take their time. I used to do the same thing. I was always the first guy out there and then as you get more experienced and you ride with more experienced riders – guys like Josh [Coppins] and [Mickael] Pichon and Stefan and Joel – they think you look like an idiot doing that so you learn to be calmer."

"I think a typical way to explain it is like how I rode at Daytona [where he won]. I really felt that I had a handle on that race. It didn't show in my lap times but I felt great all day. I felt that was what I was going to do all day. Not to be cocky at all but you learn as you go and in Europe you learn that fast."

Townley also thinks his maturity is partly down to his childhood back in NZ. "I think that has a lot to do with your upbringing and the way it's drummed into you from your parents. I know GL [Grant Langston] pretty well and I know his parents and for us racing, going to Europe and having the opportunity to come here, it's our life. So everything you do that's involved in motocross be it speaking to the public, speaking on TV, the way you

present yourself, all of those things are really important to us. It goes a long way with sponsors and fans and with the people that you're involved with."

"A great example is with our team. We train hard and all of the guys on our team live, breathe and eat wanting to be on the podium. I don't want to get myself into trouble but my personal opinion is that I don't know if homeschooling is the way to go. It's not that you don't learn the right school subjects and everything like that but there's something to be said for being at school at 8:20 and something to be said for having respect for your teachers, something to be said for when you have to stand up in front of your class and say something and think on your feet and not let the nerves get to you..."

"There's something to be said for all those skills. Interacting with people is important, too. All of those things, there's something to be said for. I don't want to be derogatory or anything but it's just the way I was brought up and I'll probably do the same eventually with my kids. It's just the way I see it, basically."

After winning the MX2 world championship in 2004 and then competing in 2005 in MX1, Ben had offers to head to America from – among others – KTM and Pro Circuit. In the 2005 season the Pro Circuit team had won

all three 125cc (or Lites) titles while KTM finished second in all three. That was a big part of where BT ended up.

"I've just always found that since I've been racing professionally I've always tried to put myself in the best situation there is and make the most of it. You have opportunities as you improve and your racing career moves along. I was with that Suzuki team in the beginning and that was way over and above where I was at that stage but I took the chance and then went on to Vangani KTM and that was at the right level for me."

"I then went to the factory [KTM] team the next year and I always tried to make sure that everyone on that team that I was involved with was working hard at that level that I wanted to be at – winning world titles. So when I got the chance to come over here I wanted to be on a team with the same sort of surroundings. I wanted to be at a team that was at that level to win and I just thought at that stage that KTM wasn't quite there. They're still improving all the time and I'm sure they'll get there one day but right now there's no better place to be on a Lites bike than here. I made that decision based off of a lot of things aside from the results but the results were definitely a part of it."

Racing with a guy like Everts will certainly do a lot for





a man's confidence and beating Everts did a lot for Ben's. "I've said before that I don't really have regrets but going into 2005 I wish that I'd been better prepared for a 450. As the season went on I progressed and progressed and I got to a point in the season where I won four motos in a row. From the middle of the season on to the end I definitely was at a really good level and it showed at the des Nations."

"A lot of water has passed under the bridge since then but that's where I'm trying to get back to right now. If I can get back to there by the time the motocross series starts and then improve from there, then I'll be cooking!"

The 'water under the bridge' for Ben started when he got to the USA and immediately hurt his knee, knocking him out of most of the 2006 season. "To be honest, I'm a year down the track but I feel like this is where I was at last year. It's kind of a bummer that I've lost that year because I didn't really move forward or go backward or anything. I'm just getting into the supercross stage of things now where I'm starting to feel comfortable out there and my comfort level is always improving."

Ben's now really looking forward to the Nationals where he can get back to his roots and hopefully challenge defending champ and team-mate Ryan Villopoto. "What's happened so far in the supercross season has just been a bonus. I wanted to obviously be in the podium mix somewhere. Supercross aside, though, that's how I imagine the outdoors going. I'm really looking forward to getting out there and running out front

all the time and knowing that that's where I belong because I feel that's my stronger point right now."

"Physically, working with Aldon [Baker – his and Ricky Carmichael's trainer], I feel that once I get to the outdoors I'm just going to be getting to a point where I'm going to be able to show my real colours. I hoped to do that in supercross as well but it's a little bit frustrating. I feel that with the way I ride at home, I can't kind of do that when I come to the racetrack at the moment. I'm still trying to get into that groove of things."

"I feel that I can do better and I can ride better and I will ride better but it's just getting to the comfort level of being able to get out there and do it. One of the toughest things for me is that in America all of the kids are used to being able to go out and do obstacles straight away and, as a kid in New Zealand, we were real reserved about doing that sort of stuff straight away. And that hasn't really changed. That's one thing I'm trying to work on, being able to get out there and do the obstacles and get it together faster. I think that's where I'm lacking at the moment."

Ben says he hasn't really had a chance to race with Villopoto outdoors yet but that he's looking forward to it. "We know each other pretty well and we know what we do and our preparation for racing is pretty similar. He's obviously quite a bit younger but in the way that we go about racing, there's not too much of a difference between us. I'm sure that come the 30-minute mark in a lot of races, you'll see us right there together."

Ben's got a list of goals that he'd like to achieve but they all hinge on his Lites success. "I want to keep my goals realistic. I want to put myself in a position for this championship and this summer I want to go after the outdoor championship."

"I realistically feel that I can take a shot at that. From there, I haven't thought too much past it because I had a two-year plan with these guys and obviously I lost that first year so I'm still trying to rebuild on that."

"In the longer view of things I've already had a year on the 450 so I know that I can ride them pretty well. I really enjoy riding the 450, especially outdoors – obviously, I can't even think about riding one in supercross yet. But within the next couple years I want to ride a 450 outdoors and then I want to get to the level one day where I'll be going for a championship in that class."





# **SIGNING OFF!**

Ricky Carmichael's farewell tour of selected SX events finally comes to an end but it's James Stewart who has the last laugh...



The calm before the storm – and after the AMA SX cyclone had blown through Daytona it's James Stewart who's the last man standing

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Daytona is Ricky's home SX but he fails to sign off on top



David Vuillemin's eighth in the Supercross standings



James Stewart's pulling clear of Chad Reed

Just as James Stewart has come to dominate the AMP'D Mobile/AMA Supercross Series in 2007, the man who could most consistently challenge him this year – and on occasion beat him – has retired.

The Daytona SX has long been among the most prestigious races on the AMA SX tour. As the winningest rider of all time at the event, Carmichael is a bundle of emotions at his last-ever Daytona. He wants nothing more than to go out a winner at the facility that marked his first-ever 250cc supercross win. But Stewart has never won the Daytona SX in the premier division and, even though it's sort of Carmichael's hometown crowd, Stewart's from Florida too.

Kyle Lewis grabs yet another holeshot but he quickly gives way to both Stewart and Kevin Windham.

Carmichael starts out near the tail of the top 10 and squirts by Chad Reed on the opening lap. The bad news for Carmichael is that Stewart is out front and running from the opening bell.

"Getting fourth in the heat I didn't have the gate position that I wanted so I had to start by the box and all of these guys were on the inside of me," Carmichael says. "I got a decent start but when these guys are on it and all the good guys are on the inside you've really got to be exceptionally good."

By the time Carmichael goes by Windham in the whoops for second on lap four, Stewart already holds a commanding lead. The race is over and Stewart wins his first Daytona SX. "It feels really good," Stewart grins. "I got a good start and I just rode. Once I saw Ricky get into second it was just going back and forth with the laps times and stuff. It was a good race."

Carmichael hangs on for second in his last appearance – on a motorcycle – at Daytona. "It wasn't as fun as I thought it would be," he admits. "You know that was probably the worst Daytona track I had ever raced. Besides that, I had a hard time all night. I wasn't riding good. I'm surprised I did that good in the Main. I left on a good note and I got out of here safe but it was a tough track for me. It was tough to get into a rhythm and it was really tight. You really couldn't let it hang out."

Orlando, basically across town from Daytona, marks the last AMA SX for Carmichael and he hopes to come out on top. But Stewart wants nothing more than to win their final SX meeting.

Reed snatches the Main Event holeshot with Carmichael and Stewart immediately on his tail. On lap two Carmichael makes a pass for the lead and attempts to distance himself from Reed and Stewart. However, Reed and Stewart both stay within striking distance of

Carmichael for the next couple of laps until Reed hits neutral heading up to a triple that claims quite a few riders throughout the night and lands on the face of the third jump, allowing Stewart by.

Reed's out of the picture which allows Stewart to focus on catching the fleeting Carmichael. For the first few laps Stewart doesn't catch Carmichael at all which makes many wonder if he's going to lay up and let Carmichael take the victory in his last-ever race. "It crossed my mind," Stewart says later, "but I couldn't because I was trying to get points for the championship."

Stewart begins cutting in on Carmichael's lead and around the halfway point he's within striking distance. Carmichael figures at that point that he will let Stewart lead for a while and learn from him. Unfortunately for RC he never finds a way to get back by Stewart and is forced to settle for second again.

"When you're going so fast, we're both pretty much the same speed," Carmichael says. "Unfortunately, I led the part of the race that you really didn't want to lead, you know? Once he got back by me I started feeling even better and I missed two good opportunities to get by him – once where we looked side-by-side on the triple and he messed up one time before the mechanics' area. What a hell of a race, though."



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## SERIES STANDINGS

### Supercross

1	James Stewart	310 points
2	Chad Reed	275
3	Tim Ferry	223
4	Kevin Windham	182
5	Ricky Carmichael	160
6	Ivan Tedesco	158
7	Michael Byrne	158
8	David Vuillemin	154
9	Heath Voss	134
10	Paul Carpenter	113

Orlando's RC's final SX event



Stewart is happy to win their last meeting in SX. "He rode the fastest 20 laps I've ever seen him ride and he had me on my feet," Stewart says. "In the beginning, I couldn't really catch him. He was riding that good. I just wanted it to be a good, clean race and let the best man win and I ended up just edging him out. The last two laps were some of my best laps of the race."

"I had to win the last one. It's the last time we were going to race each other in supercross and I could say I was the last person to beat Ricky Carmichael in supercross. Not too many people can say that."

With Carmichael out of the picture, many figure Stewart will have his way with the rest of the field. However, in Indianapolis Reed gets another holeshot while Stewart is mired in the back of the pack. "I got a pretty good jump, Chad's was a little better and he just moved over," Stewart says. "He had the right and I don't know if he spun out of his rut but he came over pretty tough. I just had to back it down. I thought maybe I could pull my normal moves and slide through the first corner and get like 10th or something but that was a no-go. I didn't have any choice but to roll the whoops. They [the rest of the field] were all over the place."

So Reed's out front and Stewart's way in the back. However, Stewart goes to work right away and, amazingly, he finds his way all the way up into second by the eighth lap. "I knew he was going to try to sprint and get away," Stewart says. "I was patient and I got through guys pretty clean without losing a lot of time so when I got into second I could push hard and get to him."

Over the ensuing six laps or so, Reed's lead dwindles until Stewart is pressuring him and that's when Stewart

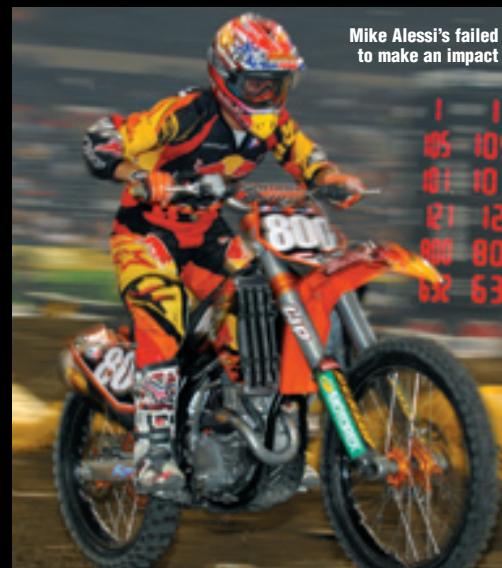
decides to bust out a jump combination through the track's main rhythm section. The common rhythm through the nine jumps is double/triple/triple/single but as he starts to bear down on Reed, Stewart goes triple/triple/triple to make the pass.

To Reed's credit he sticks to Stewart's tail and even follows his line through the rhythm section mimicking the triple/triple/triple combo. "I wanted to do that in the Main Event right away but I'm a little bummed at myself that I never just went for it and did it because I think if I would've been doing that lap after lap it would've been a different story," Reed says. "But it is what it is. I'm happy to pull the trigger three laps from the end. That shows I was confident in myself to pull it off."

Reed even attempts a pass two turns after the rhythm section but he can't make it stick and Stewart takes the victory. "This might be one of the best races of my career, right there," Stewart says of his ninth win of the season.

In Dallas Andrew Short grabs the holeshot before getting quickly gobbled up by Stewart and Reed. For the next few laps Reed gains steadily on Stewart while doing an alternate rhythm through the rhythm lane until Stewart's mechanic clues him in on the combination on his pitboard. "J-Bone said to double/triple/triple so that's what I did, then I started pulling away a little," Stewart says.

Reed stays close enough to strike late in the race and he attempts a pass in the final turn, only to come up just short at the finish. So Stewart takes his 10th win of the season and pulls another three points in the championship with only three rounds left to run.



Mike Alessi's failed to make an impact



Ryan Morais leads with one round to go

## CLOSE CALL!

With one round to go BT moves to within three points of the Lites East crown

Ben Townley has become quite a supercross racer. After landing his first win the week before Daytona, he backs it up with a second win in Daytona and challenges for the lead in the following race in Orlando before being knocked down just after passing for second.

Even with this errant race in Orlando where he finishes seventh and his first-round mechanical DNF, Townley goes into the penultimate round in Dallas only 10 points behind Ryan Morais. Townley proceeds to grab the holeshot but instead of just pulling away he gets passed by Darcy Lange and Morais. "That was probably the best start I've ever gotten," reckons the Kiwi. "In the opening laps, though, I made too many mistakes."

A few laps later Townley decides to take the less-popular outside line after the finish and it pays off as Dungey falls in the inside line and holds up Lange behind him. From here Townley goes on to win his third Main Event of the season. Perhaps more importantly, his series rival Morais finishes fourth which leaves him with a three-point lead over Townley with one race left to run. "If I could win the championship that would be awesome," Townley says. "But I'm just going to keep doing what I'm doing. It's working okay so far."

## SERIES STANDINGS

### Lites

1	Ryan Morais	114 points
2	Ben Townley	111
3	Darcy Lange	106
4	Brandon Jesseman	88
5	Matt Goerke	83
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# SHOCK WAVE!

Max Nagl started '07 as a relative unknown among the big factory names – and emerged from the pre-season internationals as a red-hot prospect. But can the German teenager keep shocking the stars all season?

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

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MX2 World Champion



**ONE-HIT-WONDER** or here to stay? That was the question doubters were asking when Max Nagl kicked factory ass in the big season opener at Mantova. But the question they should really have been asking was why it had taken so long?

Just like many kids who have hit the GP trail at 15, the boy from Bavaria seems to have been around for ever. His debut GP season in 2003 already brought points in his home round at Teutschenthal but world rankings of 35, 28, 16 and 20 have not been earth-shattering. And I recall being told two summers back by KTM's team manager Tobbe Gustafsson that Max was not even on the short-list with Mattighofen for a factory ride – "not good enough" being his businesslike assessment.

But those indifferent GP performances should have been set against his form on home turf. The German Masters ranks up there as one of the most hotly-contested national series and Max has only lost it once – to Ken De Dycker. Whether it's a 250 stroker or 450

four-banger, they've both brought success to the boy who's only five foot six in his stocking feet.

"I've always been better on a big bike. It suits my style better, even though I'm quite small. I have a flowing style. In MX2 you need to be aggressive – on the gas – and that's just not me. In MX1 you can let the bike do the work – you have to think when you are riding a 450, not just open the throttle."

"A 450 is much more difficult to ride. Go on the gas too quickly and, unless you're very lucky, you'll get in a highsider and it will throw you down the track. You have to treat the bike with respect and feel your way – that's what appeals to me about the big bike."

And that desire to be, or at least feel, in control was what cost Max in MX2. "I had real problems to ride the early pace there. If you watch an MX2 race you will see the riders going wild for the first few laps, pushing their limit to that infamous 110 per cent. I could never bring myself to do that and I was losing everything in those early laps. I could move forward as the race wore on but I was giving myself too much to do from 20th on lap four."

"I knew already a couple of years ago that my future lay in MX1 but it was a collective decision to stay one more season in MX2 last summer. Myself, the Sarholz team and KTM all felt that I should give it one more year. I could win in Germany but I was still too young at 18 to race the 450 in the GPs – I just wasn't strong enough physically to take on the ultimate challenge."

So what happened during the winter? "I trained hard. I showed already at the Nations last September that I could run with them but I also knew I had to get stronger. But it's difficult. I concentrated a lot of power training this winter but you cannot build overnight. Too much muscle and you'll get problems with arm-pump but too little is also no good because you have to be able to hold the bike over a full race distance. You simply have to find the right compromise."

## DIY

*Help is at hand!*

*Believe it or not but it wasn't until Valence that Max got a full-time mechanic this year.*

*"At first I had a Spaniard, Campano's mechanic from last year. He was a nice kid but he was just too young, too inexperienced. Then I got a guy called Jorg – he had spannered for German national riders and was a really good mechanic but he has a full-time job as a car mechanic and I can understand that he didn't want to give that up.*

*"Mark Craig helped me out as a favour at Grobbendonk but now I have Rene Ebert working for me for the rest of the year – he was with Dennis Schröter, who rode the Nations, before.*

*"It wasn't easy in February. I have a house in Belgium and that's the only place you can train but the rest of the Sarholz team is back in Germany now. It's a couple of hours drive back there if something serious needed fixing but I was having to do all of my own adjustments, even wash the bike. I don't mind but my job is to train and race and, believe me, to be at the top in the GPs that's enough!"*



And Max has certainly done that! A runaway victory in the Saturday qualifier at Mantova was dismissed as a one-off. It was only a show race after all but those factory stars who crossed the line 20 seconds back were not out there for formation dancing and the shock came in the real thing the next day.

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**KTM**

"The new 450 from KTM is a really good bike. You saw at the Nations already that the '06 was good but the '07 is even better. There is more power all the way through the range but particularly top-end."

"The frame is similar to last year and we have been able to draw on the experience of last year in the set-up. But I notice a difference in the handling – you sit a little higher than on last year's bike and that makes it a little more difficult to ride in the turns but, as my style is to stand most of the time, it handles better overall."

"You do notice the extra weight of the battery and so on but that evens itself out when you crash or stall. There's no hassle anymore, no panic. I simply press the button and away I go while the others stand there kicking. And that costs energy!"

"KTM have promised I will get factory parts. I won't get a full factory bike, I know that. You have to be in the works team to get a full bike. I expect to get the frame first and, if all goes well, perhaps I will get some engine parts. But the standard motor is already good and Willem has done a great job with the jetting and so on."



Closed down long before the first turn, Max started race one on the edge of the top 10 but he tore past the likes of Strijbos and Coppins and after 10 minutes was pushing leader David Philippaerts. Anyone else and Max would have been through but the Italian takes no prisoners – twice he slammed the door shut when Max was effectively through and a last lap slip dropped the German to fifth. Glory time over? Forget it!

"My starts in MX2 were a catastrophe but I can do it on a 450. When your head's on straight, anything is possible if the bike is set up correctly – not too lean and not too rich. And Willem, the chief mechanic at Sarholz, has done a mega job!"

And the commitment at turn one is also there. The look of terror in Bader Manneh's eyes in the Italian qualifier, the way Steve Ramon tried to overcome the law of dynamics to turn even sharper on race day and the way Max slammed his Toomer across the pack a fortnight later at Valence have all confirmed the new vigour.

"You have to say to yourself and your rivals 'this corner is mine!' And I have the confidence to do that now." And, out in front, Max simply left the world standing. The factory stars never saw which way he went.

Race three brought victory in defeat as Jonathan Barragan did run him down in the final laps but Max was not worried. "I could probably have won that moto too but I didn't want to take any risks. You don't usually give up a victory two laps from home, Jonathan was no danger for the overall and that was priority number one. It's just like in a series. Important that you win the title – not how many races you win on the way there."

Suddenly everyone wanted to speak to Max. "Yes, that was a new experience for me. I was a star in Germany but in the GPs and on the international stage I was a nobody. But after Mantova all sorts of people were on the phone

– sponsors, clothing and helmet manufacturers. I already had my deals for this year sorted but it was a good feeling and my value has gone up for next year. Hopefully, anyway!"

A week is a long time and it could all have turned around if more results had not followed. But they did! Third at Grobendondk, another runaway win at Valence and third overall, 4-5 at Hawkstone, a clean sweep at Frankenbach. Max has shown to be no one-hit-wonder – but has he peaked too early?

"I don't think so. You never know how far the other riders are with their preparation but I won't be at my peak form before the GPs either. I've still got more in reserve and I can also up my pace still more."

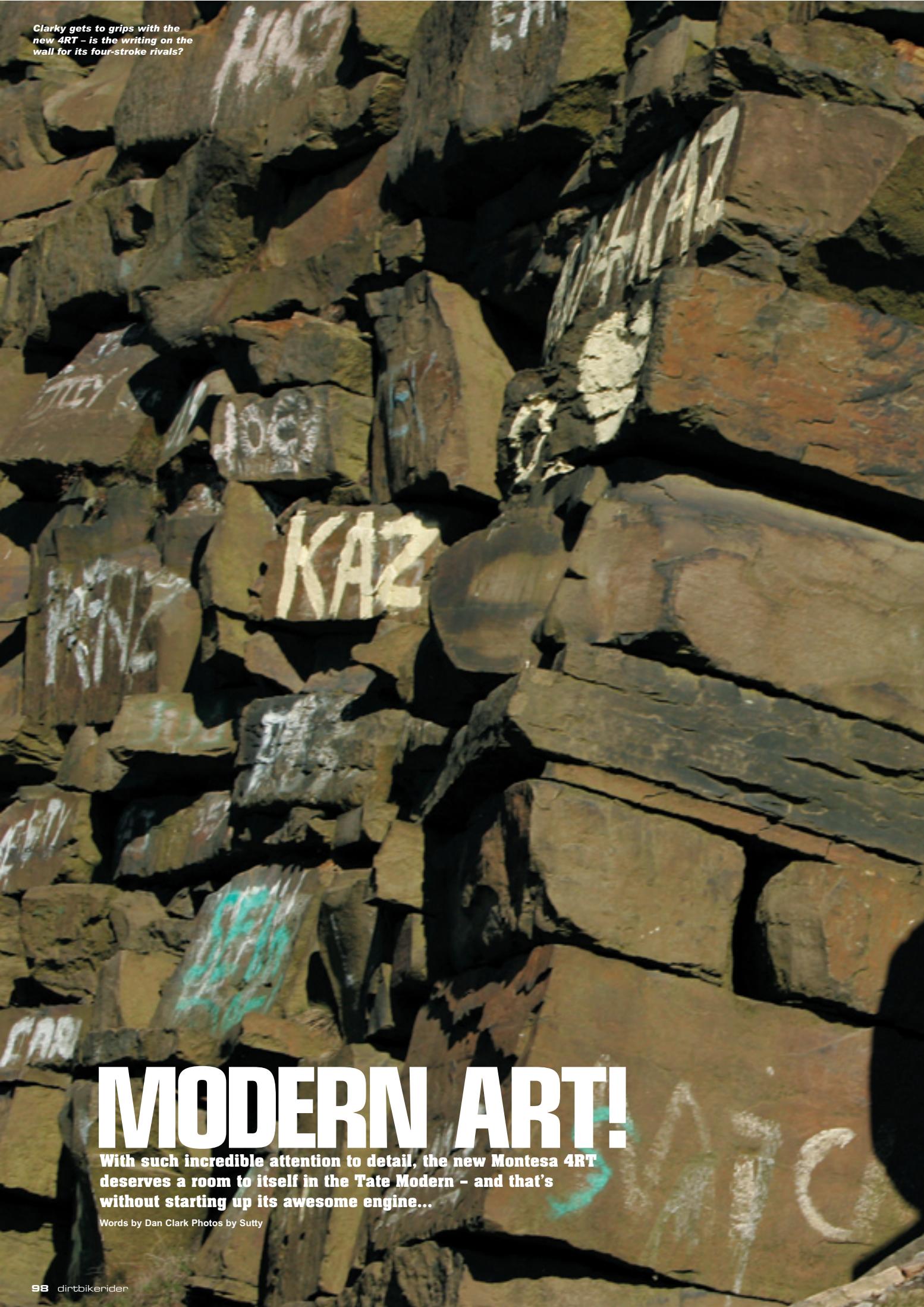
"What I need to concentrate on now is riding the bike. I've done the cycling, I've done the weights but I have to build so that I can race two times 40 no problem. I'd like to have been a little taller but I can't change that. I've put on three kilos during the winter – from 65 to 68 – and it's all where it gives me more strength so I'm optimistic."

"The two weeks training with Stefan Everts in Spain were also good. It was hard work, Stefan concentrated a lot on riding motos and I learnt from that but I was there just like the training school pupils. I don't know what secrets Stefan passed on to the factory riders, it was just the four of them and him when they got together at the end of the day."

"I knew that the 450 was faster but MX1 is a new world and you have to adapt, both physically and mentally. It is the class of kings!"

"And those results were good for me. I already believed in myself but they were the confirmation. It's a strange feeling, overtaking a Coppins at Mantova or a Strijbos at Grobendondk. At first I asked myself why they were riding so slow! But it's not easy, it's the result of hard work and I hope I can carry it through to the GPs too. That would be nice but I'm keeping my feet on the ground."





Clarky gets to grips with the  
new 4RT – is the writing on the  
wall for its four-stroke rivals?

# MODERN ART!

With such incredible attention to detail, the new Montesa 4RT deserves a room to itself in the Tate Modern – and that's without starting up its awesome engine...

Words by Dan Clark Photos by Sutty



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I'M VERY excited to be testing the 2007 Montesa 4RT as the last time I rode a Montesa trials bike for DBR was back in 2002 and that was a Cota 315 two-smoker. Two-stroke motors or four, Montesa have long been known for their engineering expertise – mostly thanks to the Honda connection – and I'm hoping they've gone from strength to strength with their 4RT.

It's impossible to swing your leg over one of these bikes without noticing they look like a piece of art. Every little detail is perfect, even down to the billet aluminium handlebar clamps that have HRC machined into them. As well as being aesthetically pleasing the 4RT also looks like a solid bit of engineering with the 250cc four-stroke motor nestling nicely in the aluminium frame.

Flame red mudguards are the finishing touch

to this bike's looks and they really help make the machine stand out along with a little help from the obligatory bold new graphics of course. But, speaking of things that stand out, what's going on with the coil which looks like it's just been stuck on as an afterthought...

When you get on the bike you can't help but notice it's very comfortable to stand on and feels very well weighted for balance.

Starting the 4RT is a little bit strange after being used to kickstarting two-strokes all my life. The best way to do it is be very lazy and slow with the kickstart lever while staying away from the throttle. Get it right and it'll start first kick, turn the throttle or kick too fast and you'll be at it all day. Once fired up the bike sounds awesome although it does seem louder than your average trials iron.

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## Hot stuff!

*It's colder than a witch's whatsit but the 4RT raises the temperature*

Okay, hands up time – I'm really not the best qualified rider to be giving my opinion on any new trials bike, let alone the Mont 4RT. But the chance to squeeze in a day out of the office and spend it at Back Cowm Quarry was too good to pass up – especially as the sun was shining and I awoke with the kind of hunger pangs that can only be satisfied by a Little Chef Olympic Breakfast.

I had my first ever trial at Back Cowm and, virtually 29 years to the day later, very little has changed. It still offers an awesome array of top trials terrain and, even with the sun beaming down, get caught in the biting wind howling across the tops of the East Lancs moors and it's still possibly the coldest place in England on a March morning.

The last time I rode a four-popper in a trial it was a cheeky little Honda TLR200 twinshock back in the day when Clarky was still probably wearing Pampers and sporting only slightly more hair than he does now! This hardly leaves me clued up on cutting-edge four-stroke trials technology and means I approach the test half expecting a bike with sewing machine style power delivery.

So what's the '07 4RT actually like? Well, for starters, apart from the rear silencer which still looks a little, er, agricultural for my liking she's a stunner with the kind of attention to detail you expect from HRC. Starting her up – despite Dan's warning – is a piece of the proverbial p\*\*s. In fact, I reckon you could turn it over by hand! I also really like the gearbox. It may be a little notchy for some but this makes for positive changes – there's no danger of finding a false neutral and you know at all times what gear you're in.

Now a rider of Clarky's calibre may pick up on a millisecond's delay between throttle and thrust – luckily, if he's good enough to notice it he's good enough to deal with it so stop moaning you miserable Yaarkshire sod. For me there's no noticeable delay and, in fact, maybe only a hint of engine-braking – plus the gorgeous exhaust note – betrays the fact that this ain't no two-smoker!

The 4RT feels incredibly well balanced, goes exactly where it's pointed and has a lovely grunty power delivery that seeks out grip. It's also got to be the weapon of choice for huge hill climbs and would be perfect for eating up the ground between sections in the kind of big-lap Northern Centre trials I cut my teeth on.





## Montesa Cota 4RT

### specifications

Capacity:	249.1cc
Bore and stroke:	76.5mm x 54.2mm
Front suspension:	Showa 39mm (175mm travel)
Rear suspension:	Pro-Link/Showa (170mm travel)
Front brake:	185mm disc
Rear brake:	150mm disc
Carburation:	Fuel injection
Gearbox:	Five-speed
Wheelbase:	1321mm
Dry weight:	73.8kg
Retail price:	£4599 inc VAT

For this test we chose to use the excellent Cowm Leisure site ([www.cowmleisure.com](http://www.cowmleisure.com)) that's situated between Rochdale and Rawtenstall on the A671 in Lancashire. This place has everything you could ever want to test a trials bike – rocks, mud, hills, the lot!

Testing the 4RT here really opened my eyes to the four-stroke way of riding. For starters it's a lot of fun to ride but it does take a lot of getting used to. I know a few people who have tried a 4RT and given up on it because your body and brain are telling you to go when you open the throttle like you would on a two-stroke but with the 4RT you almost have to wait a millisecond for the bike to respond.

I was using first gear for every section which was lovely and slow with the motor's engine-braking. The motor has plenty of grunt and will pull second from a standstill for big steps too. This bike really rocks on big hill climbs and it's in its element on full power with the engine singing and sounding awesome.

This bike finds grip like no other and once you get your timing right there's not much you can't get up once your bike, brain, body and bike are all in sync – nothing grips like a Montesa, except maybe a Yorkshireman hanging onto a five pound note!



Everything fitted to this bike has been thoroughly tried and tested and made perfect – it all works. The steering angle is right and doesn't tuck in, the AJP brakes are great and the sumpguard is perfectly flat like you would not believe.

The suspension is good too. The rear uses a linkage to get the best from the shock absorber and I'd recommend speeding up the rebound too to make the action feel more springy. As well as working well to optimize grip the suspension can also take hard hits such as drop offs and rock steps.

I reckon this bike is pretty much perfect for all riders in all conditions as proven by Dougie Lampkin and Takahisa Fujinami outdoors and newly crowned indoor champion Toni Bou. And the 4RT is a proven winner at club level too which comes as no surprise to me after riding one – the 4RT really is that good.

And as an added bonus there are many optional extras available for the 4RTs too. As well as plenty of blinging carbon fibre goodies there's a throttle body system which allows you to re-map your bike's ignition to suit the way you ride. All-in-all the '07 4RT is a great bike to ride and a masterpiece of modern engineering.



For more shots of the marvellous Mont and the even more delicious Dan check out the gallery at [www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com)



# EXCITE-A-BIKE!

**Sutty gets a bad dose of collecticus newbikeitis as he picks up his '07 steed from KMUK**

Words and photos by Sutty

ONE OF my earliest memories in life is being driven to Lee Brothers in Sowerby Bridge by my father in a maroon Triumph 2000 – with rickety trailer on tow – as he took me to pick up his brand new YZ465. Although my old man didn't start racing – or even riding – motorcycles until his late 20s he quickly made it through the amateur ranks to AMCA expert on a succession of well used and abused Montesas then Maicos.

The Yamaha YZ465 was to be his first and last ever new bike and I'm pretty sure we were both equally excited by the prospect of going to the shop to collect it. He was giddy about getting a brand new bike and I was totally fascinated by the sights and smells of any shop that housed motocross bikes or bits.

Looking back I figure I learnt two things that day – collecting a new motocross bike is indeed the best thing you can ever do and not even the hardest-faced of dirt bike salesmen can turn down a snotty-nosed kid's request for a Heikki Mikkola poster.

Around eight years later I too found out what it's like to take delivery of a brand new motocross bike although I didn't have to collect it myself because Santa delivers! From what I can gather Santa must live somewhere near my folks because his local motocross dealer is Lee Brothers too – I know this because my new KX100 was covered in their stickers. A whole 18 years on and I've grown so much I now require an extra 350cc and two more strokes of power but I still get equally excited by picking up new bikes.

Enlarged pupils, a fixed beauty pageant style smile and a sweaty crease are all symptoms of collecticus newbikeitis. I was showing all these signs and also salivating slightly when Wakker and myself drove to Kawasaki HQ to pick up the new magazine-machine (a 2007 KX450F) for myself and a Tom Church poster for Geoff.

The KX450F was an all-new model in Kawasaki's large arsenal of motocross weaponry for 2006. As an MX1 class

replacement for the rather long-in-the-tooth KX250 the zero-six fo-fiddy was a well-rounded race bike which was well received by the MX public and magazine test teams.

But as good as the '06 model was Kawasaki figured they could make it even better and not just in a Bold New Graphics kind of way. The '07 bike does come with classy new stickers but more importantly there are over 50 bonafide refinements and technical improvements over the '06 model which Kawasaki claim should make it faster, feistier, funkier and five instead of four-speeded.

With most 450 motors already putting power to the ground faster than your average rider could ever want them to it's good news that the frame and boingers have come in for most of the improvement work – power without control is nothing...

To help keep KXF riders in control of their weapon the frame is now slightly wider at the footpegs and slimmer up top which helps the bike feel physically smaller while retaining its roomy feel. In my opinion this is a vast improvement on last year's bike which felt rear end high and generally awkward to ride.

The suspension has been revalved at both ends with the front forks getting super-special Diamond-Like Carbon coating to decrease stiction and offer a much smoother ride. The black DLC coating on the lower tubes looks uber-trick and uber-trick looking bikes can shave seconds from your lap times – possibly more – so it has to be good.

After initially testing the KX450F at the media launch of said model I found it to be like a super-charged 250F – light and nimble but ridiculously quick. I also claimed I 'could slap some numbers on it and go race tomorrow'.

Seeing as I've not yet found time to break in my own KX450F – or bolt on any bling – that's exactly what I'm gonna do for next month's magazine-machine column. Run her in, change the oil and filter, then slap on some sticky digits and go find a local race. It's bound to be carnage...





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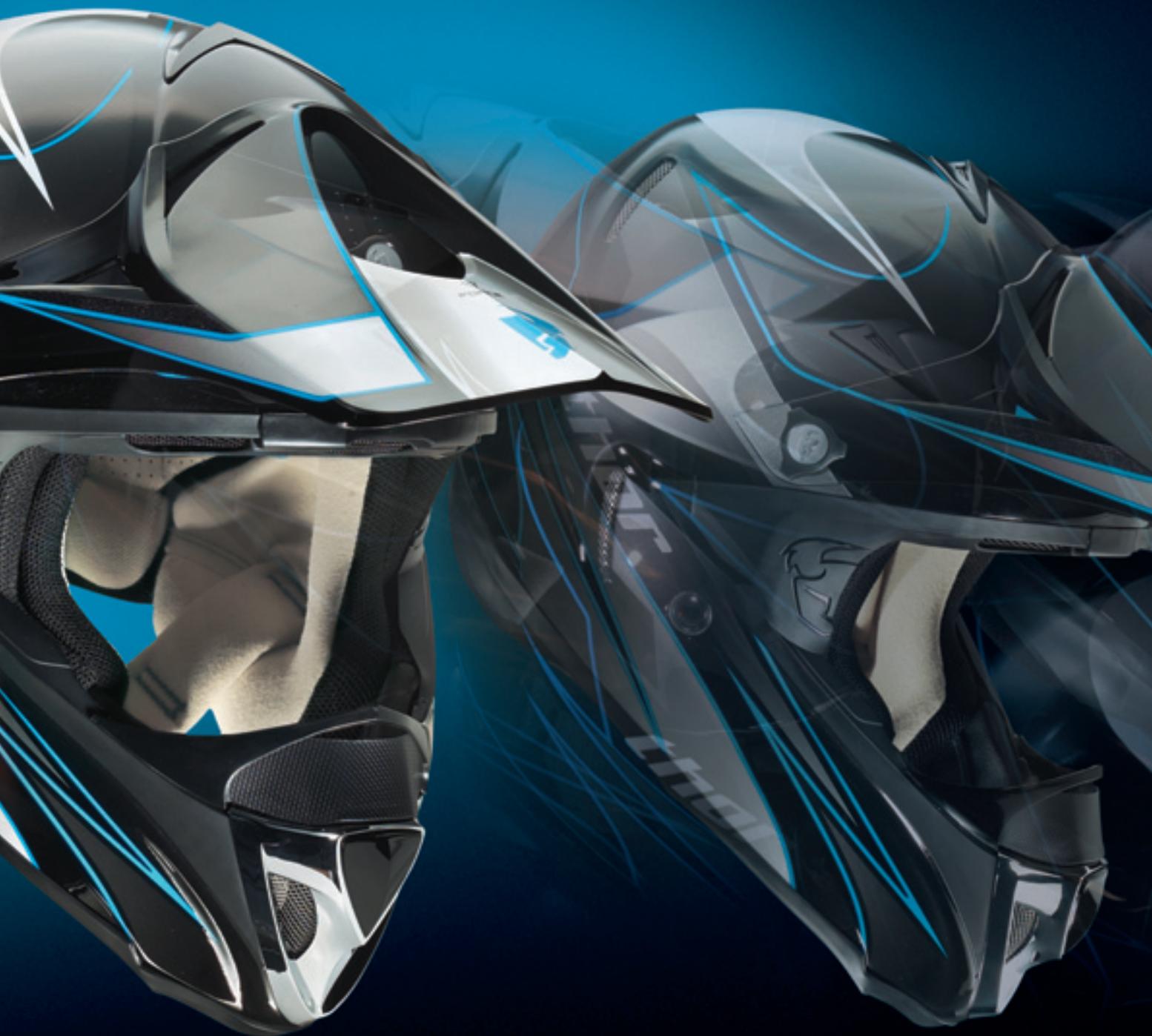
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profile

*Shaun Simpson has certainly surprised a few people this season. "I'm at the age when it can start happening!"*





# LONE WULF!

**Shaun Simpson's proving you don't need factory support to make it big in MX2**

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

**YOU NEED** factory or importer support to go for major titles, right? Wrong! Every major manufacturer has at least one supported rider going for glory in the Maxxis MX2 series but they're all being shown a clean pair of heels a quarter of the way through the series by a genuine privateer troupe – Shaun Simpson and Roger Magee's Wulfsport Kawasaki team!

"There's no help available from Kawasaki UK because Molson had it all and none from Kawasaki Belgium either," reveals the 19-year-old who calls the tiny Scottish village

of Gauldry home but has followed the clan tradition to lead a Bohemian existence all over Europe.

"We get the bikes through GPKR – the team which took the world title last year with Chris Pourcel. Patrick Gelade's Gepa shop is a Kawasaki dealership and he did us a good price but Roger has to buy all of the bikes and spares from his pocket and what he gets from sponsors like Northern Ireland Events, Seven Up and Discover Ireland. We're definitely a private team."

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It took guts for Magee and the Simpson clan to turn their back on Honda support last autumn but it's already paying dividends for Shaun. "I think it's a combination of the bike and the training and my head's stronger too. I'm another year older, another year stronger and I'm at the age where it can start happening if it's going to happen at all.

"But the bike's made it easier for me. I'm relaxing more on the bike now. The standard Kawasaki I used until Hawkstone was already a really good bike but the engine we have from GPKR is even better. It's my type of engine – torquey. It revs but I have power where I like it down the lower end and middle so I can come out of turns in a higher gear. It's not actually made by GPKR themselves but it comes from the tuner who makes their engines.

"I had to work so hard on the Honda last year. I'm not blaming the bike for my injuries –

Lierop was my fault when the front end washed out and I broke my collarbone – but I was having to push so hard it was inevitable I would make mistakes and crash.

"On the Kawasaki I'm coming into corners more relaxed, taking the line I want to, knowing I will have power on the straight when I gas it. With the Honda you had to take certain lines just to keep the power on. I could even get the jump at the start but as soon as it came to hooking the next gear I was left standing by the rest."

But the green bike is not the only change in the Simpson world. "We told Roger last year that we could do with a base in Belgium and a Belgian friend called Luc Goffin who had already introduced us to GPKR found us this place. We're just in the corner of a big hall but we've partitioned it off and it is so handy.

"Last year we were having to take



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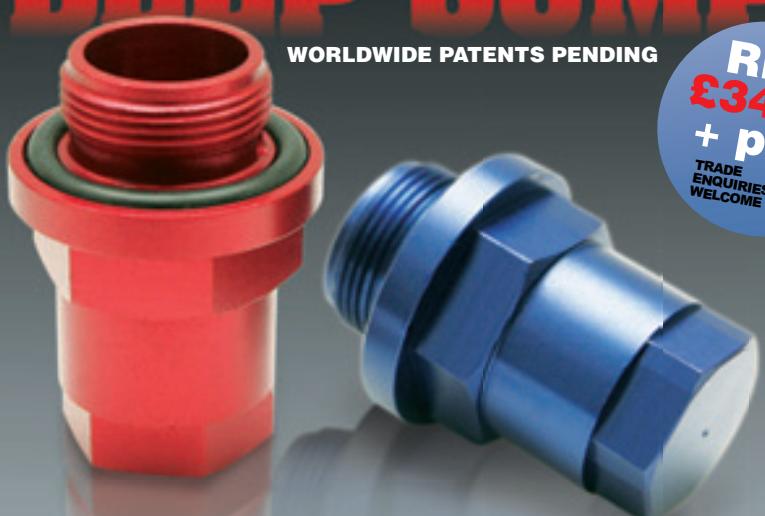
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### Little Brother

*The spanner wielding sibling*

Many thought Shaun's younger brother might join him at the GPs one day in a double act but Stefan has other ideas. "I enjoy riding but for fun and when I want to. I'm just as happy working on the bike – plus I don't have to do all that fitness stuff."

everything we had in spares and so on with us in the back of the truck. From here we have a wide choice of practice tracks within reasonable distance and we have somewhere to go back to clean up afterwards. We've got a sand blaster, a paraffin wash tank, work benches, grinder, vices, presses, welders, everything you could need and we've been to Dunkirk, Lommel, Honda Park and a couple of tracks in Holland to practice."

Training has also taken on a new face this year. "I've started training with Yves Demeulemeester, the guy who's guided so many Belgians to success and Mickael Pichon too. I was seeing him from 10 till four Monday,

Wednesday, Friday at the start of the year and when I can't be there now the season has started I get instructions by email.

"There's me, Manuel Priem, Kristof Salaets, Steve Ramon, Marcus Norlen and many more. Yves tries to team us up with someone who's at the same stage of their build-up but it's basically an individual programme for each person. We all go running at the same time but we will have different targets depending on heart rate.

"Last year I was training alone and I didn't even know if I was doing the right thing. We didn't know what to do, what to eat, when to rest – it was just guesswork and training is

a science nowadays."

But there's still a Bohemian feel about the Simpson camp. They can now park up the truck at their Belgian base but Shaun, dad Willie and younger brother Stefan – now officially race mechanic while dad does the engines, suspension and driving – still live in the truck and the Sprinter they use to go training has been in the family since Shaun raced the 85s.

"I think it's old school from dad. He did it that way and we've just carried it on. I wouldn't like to go to a hotel in the evenings but it was hard work sometimes, like when we were stripping the bike down in the back of the truck parked on the side of the road."

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"Sometimes we'd spend half-a-day finding a track in the middle of Germany or Sweden to practice and we hardly ever knew where there was a gym or a swimming pool. There have been times when we've just stopped in a lay-by and I've been for a run down the road or across the fields."

"When I see Martin Honda turn up with 20 guys putting the awning up and the rider just sitting there – the spoilt brat syndrome – it annoys me a bit but it's all experience, you see places, do things, you get to know a lot more people and you respect what you have. I enjoy the world of motocross our way and I wouldn't want to do anything else."

"I've never known life without bikes around. Dad was racing for 25 years and even before I got my first bike I was scooting around on my push bike at the races. I rode the Orkney Beach Race as a nine-year-old and finished ninth overall against the adults but dad had always said he wouldn't let me race regularly until I was 13. It was hard at times – particularly as I had to watch while he was racing – but I was riding regularly back home, learning to handle a bike without the stress of racing. I was actually enjoying riding when I wanted for how long I wanted without having to do it. Dad never pushed us, if we didn't want to ride that day then we didn't ride. He wanted us to enjoy it and I'm still enjoying it."

"There are so many kids who have been racing since they were six and they're burnt out with the whole idea of it at 17 and want to do anything else, anything except motocross. It was a new experience of course to actually be in a race rather than practising but it was actually fun – adrenaline and all that."

Race victories came in his first full season but missed races meant no actual titles in a whistlestop youth career which ended with him

going adult full-time at 16 for a season in which he finished every race in the points at the British and ended 12th in the series as well as gaining his first GP experience on a Tim Chambers KTM.

"Roger got talking to us and told us to hang fire. He went and bought the truck and we were overwhelmed. Roger's been spot on ever since we got together."

And 2007 has just grown and grown.



"When Tim folded we were still determined to go ahead with our plan to ride the GPs and do it with two bikes and spares from Honda. I knew that I had the speed to qualify from Desertmartin and the Isle of Wight the year before and we intended to put a big top box and awning on the Sprinter."

And that was where Roger Magee came in.

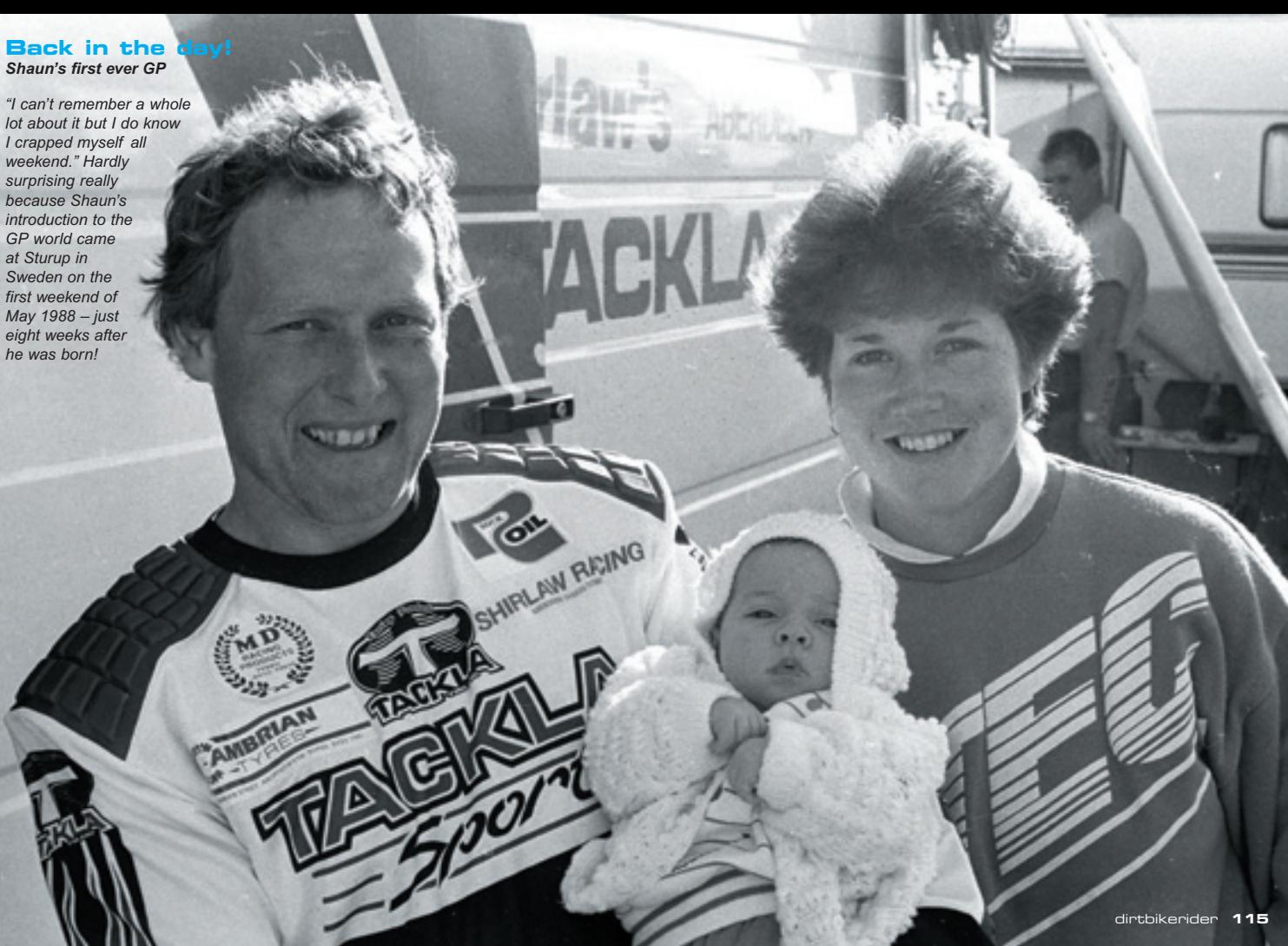
Following the family tradition that where there's a race there will be a Simpson, Shaun raced on the continent every weekend before Hawkstone this year. "I was ready for it this year. I'd had race time on the bike and you need a couple of races to get the arm-pump out, the nerves out, the bike almost set up right."

"I think it's stupid only to race" ▶

## Back in the day!

Shaun's first ever GP

"I can't remember a whole lot about it but I do know I crapped myself all weekend." Hardly surprising really because Shaun's introduction to the GP world came at Sturup in Sweden on the first weekend of May 1988 – just eight weeks after he was born!





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### Fast father!

Wide-open Wullie!

In a GP career spanning 15 years dad Willie reserved his best ever finishes for the years when he was on a Maico with an eighth in his debut season of 1982 at Corseul in France and the same result at Markelo in Holland four years later.

But perhaps his biggest moment on the international stage came in 1984 when he was called up to ride for Britain in the des Nations. It was the last time the event was run for the separate classes over two weekends and Willie – teamed with Dave Thorpe, Kurt Nicoll and Jeremy Whatley – came home 25-22 in the 500 contest at the Ruskeasanta sand pit but his Suzuki broke in both motos of the 250 Trophee contest at Varberg in Sweden a week later.

There were actually two Scots racing that day – Glaswegian-born Jeff Ward swept both motos for the US of A.

With mum Vanda, brother Stefan and dad Wullie



championships. A race is a race and it's good practice. And racing different types of tracks helps you get ready for what you will face in the GPs. The tracks abroad are much faster, the jumps are bigger and you don't get to ride blue groove tracks like you find in Italy anywhere in the UK. When I go home I hear some riders complaining if there's a few rocks but some of the practice tracks in France are nothing else – just sheer rock. It's a new experience to the British kids and a lot of them just flip out.

"We went into Canada Heights feeling organised. We had tested suspension, engines, everything and I felt relaxed and smooth. The track was to my liking – quite a few ruts, a choice of lines, loamy and new to everyone. I was fourth in qualifying and I didn't expect to win but I knew the start was going to be important and I had tested concrete starts.

"I made a really good jump in the first race, passed Carl Nunn on the first lap and just checked out. It just felt so easy, I don't know if Carl was holding the other guys up but I had the quickest lap time, I felt smooth, doing my own race. Dad doesn't show a lot of emotion but I know he was chuffed, mum was crying and I think it shocked a lot of people.

"The second race I didn't get such a great start, then my foot got caught in Tom Church's rear wheel – he stalled and we both fell over. Then halfway round the lap there was another guy fallen off after a jump and I crashed into him. I thought this race is not happening but I charged and I was about ninth with three laps to go then passed Dougan and Wayne Smith on the last lap for fifth. I felt strong and it just went to show that the training was paying off because I was going as fast at the end as I was at the beginning.

"And now I have the red plate too. I normally enjoy Landrake with its loamy dirt but this year it was so dry and I wasn't liking it in practice. I was 10th in qualifying and just hoped for good starts. The first race I got away about 15th but I pulled through. I tucked in behind Tommy Searle, followed his lines and eventually passed him, then I tensed up and he came back past but I lost the arm-pump again, found some better lines and passed him back again. Then Swanepoel's bike broke and I had the points lead."

And anyone who wants to take it away again had better know Shaun won't give it up without a fight!





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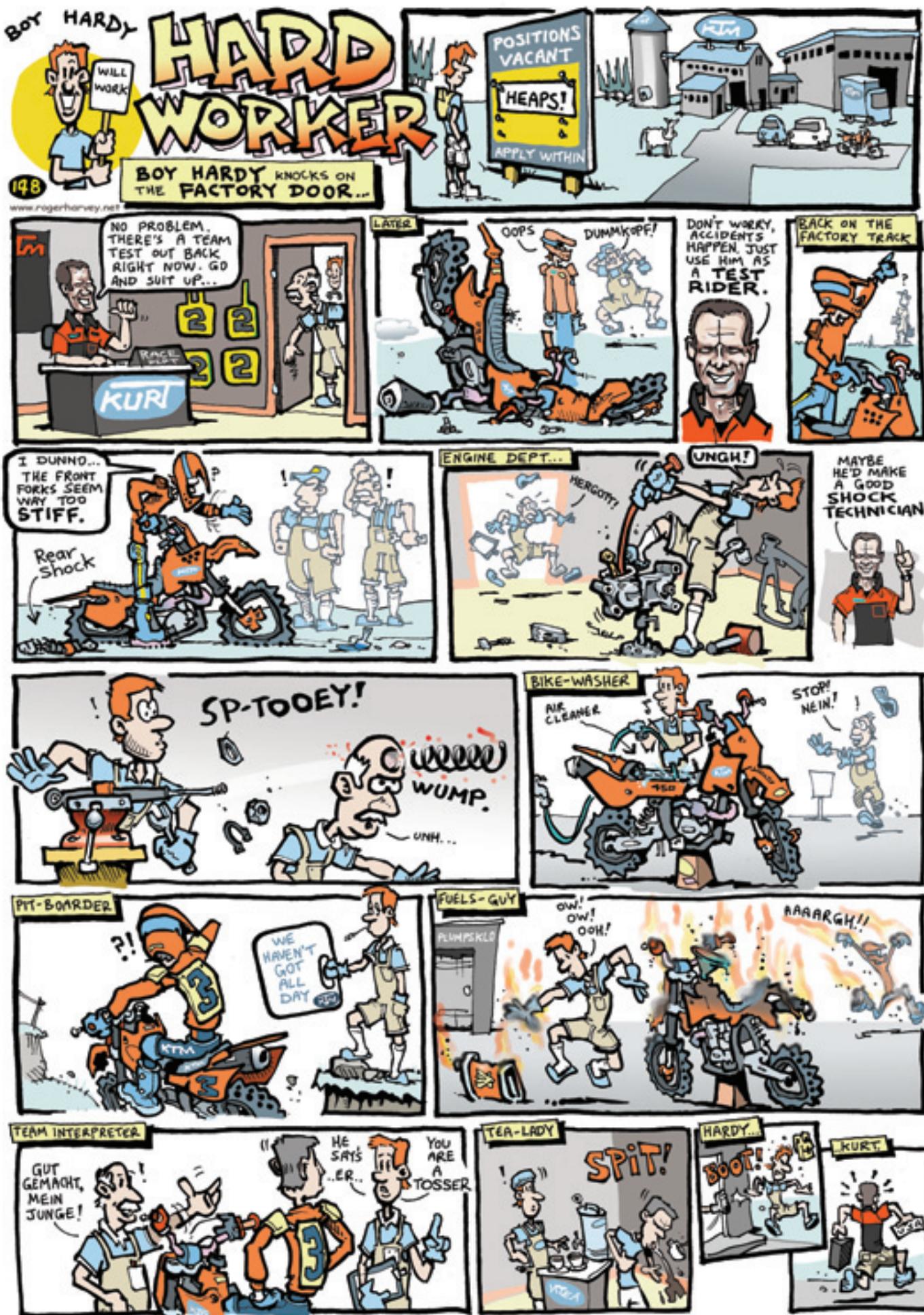
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# FIRST BLOOD!

**De Dycker and Simpson set the pace after Maxxis openers**

Photo by Toby Fuller

**WITH TWO** rounds down and six to go there's still everything to play for in the '07 Maxxis British MX Championship – although DBR's version of Laurel and Hardy (yep, we mean you Gordy and Billy) better pull their fingers out and take an MX1 overall for the team!

Gordy actually does kick off his campaign in a winning way, taking the first race victory for PAR Homes Honda at the series opener at Canada Heights in early March. But defending champion Ken De Dycker – fourth in the first moto – bounces back in the second to win and secure the overall from the Crock Star by a scant two points. Billy Mac ends the day third with a 2-3 card, just ahead of Pioneer Yamaha's Brad Anderson.

In the MX2 division Molson Kawasaki's Gareth Swanepoel's 2-3 card is good enough for the overall but Wulfsport Kawasaki's Shaun Simpson provides for many the shock of the day with his 1-5 results good enough for the second step on the podium. Factory KTM pilot Tommy Searle grabs third overall – his second race win making up for ninth in the opener.

On to round two at Landrake and CAS Honda's De Dycker claims a maximum points haul from the 3-2 of Gordy and the 2-3 of Billy. Super-consistent James Noble goes fourth with 4-4 race finishes from cool Kiwi Scotty Columb. But the day goes pear-shaped for Anderson whose race two fifth doesn't make up for a race one DNF.

MX2's tighter than a duck's arse with the two Tommys – that's Searle and Church – ending the day on 51 points apiece and the nod going KTM's way by virtue of Searle's 5-1 card compared to TC's 1-5 finishes. Proving Canada Heights was no fluke, Simpson gets on the podium with 3-3 scores – just ahead of US imports Sean Hamblin and Mike Brown who end the day tied on 46 points.

Defending champion Carl Nunn, after struggling to 20th at Canada Heights, misses Landrake to give his back injury – sustained at the Hawkstone International – time to heal.

## Series standings

### MX1

1	Ken De Dycker (CAS Honda)	115 points
2	Gordon Crockard (PAR Homes Honda)	105
3	Billy Mackenzie (Motorex Kawasaki)	104
4	James Noble (Multitek Honda)	84
5	Brad Anderson (Pioneer Yamaha)	69
6	Mark Eastwood (Wiseco Honda)	58
7	Glen Phillips (ARW Yamaha)	48
8	Danny Smyth (Wiseco Honda)	44
9	Scotty Columb (Suzuki)	40
10	Jussi Vehvilainen (Honda)	40

### MX2

1	Shaun Simpson (Wulfsport Kawasaki)	101 points
2	Tommy Searle (Red Bull KTM)	94
3	Mike Brown (CAS Honda)	88
4	Sean Hamblin (Swift Suzuki)	88
5	Gareth Swanepoel (Molson Kawasaki)	79
6	Tom Church (Molson Kawasaki)	74
7	Jason Dougan (Fork Rent Suzuki)	68
8	Martin Barr (Bike It/Dixon Yamaha)	64
9	Lewis Gregory (Relentless Suzuki)	58
10	Jake Nicholls (Fork Rent Suzuki)	40



For more British championship shots check out the gallery at [www.dirtbikerider.co.uk](http://www.dirtbikerider.co.uk)



Billy Mac holds third in the MX1 table after two rounds





# SHAUN STAR!

**Simpson on top as British Masters kicks off at Culham**

Words and photos by still-mx.co.uk

**AFTER TAKING** a spectacular double victory at the Culham round of the Masters last year, Jason Dougan makes it three-on-the-trot with a start-to-finish win in race one ahead of the other 40 Pro 125 riders – yep, 41 riders somehow start the moto. Shaun Simpson scraps his way to second while Jake Nicholls takes third.

Moto two's a very different story. Lewis Gregory yanks the holeshot with Nicholls tight up to his tailpipe while Simpson's third and Doogs is fifth behind young gun Ashley Greedy. Simpson moves into the lead on lap three and is never headed, Nicholls finishes a close runner-up with Dougan just one second further back.

In the Pro Open division Gordon Crockard and Brad Anderson trade wins but the Pioneer Yamaha rider's poor showing in the opening moto restricts him to fourth on the day behind Wayne Smith. The Crock Star's second moto third hands him the overall from Mark 'Monster' Hucklebridge who steers his MotoXtreme Kawasaki to a pair of second places.

## Results – round one

### Pro 125

1	Shaun Simpson (Wulfsport Kawasaki)	97 points
2	Jason Dougan (Fork Rent Suzuki)	95
3	Jake Nicholls (Fork Rent Suzuki)	92
4	Ashley Greedy (PAR Honda)	82
5	Lewis Gregory (Relentless Suzuki)	80
6	David Willet (Bladez Honda)	80

### Pro Open

1	Gordon Crockard (PAR Honda)	95
2	Mark Hucklebridge (MotoXtreme Kawasaki)	94
3	Wayne Smith (PAR Honda)	88
4	Brad Anderson (Pioneer Yamaha)	83
5	Jody Smyth (Wiseco Honda)	82
6	Stuart Flockhart (Yamaha)	80

### Amateur 125cc

1	Owen Delaney (Yamaha)	138
2	Tom Fish (Honda)	138
3	Sam Simmons (Yamaha)	136
4	Jamie Dobson (Kawasaki)	133
5	Ashley Williamson (Suzuki)	125
6	Luke Spence (KTM)	115

### Amateur Open

1	Jon Slesser (Honda)	150
2	Jamie Powell (Yamaha)	141
3	Stephen Tillotson (Suzuki)	133
4	James Shaw (Kawasaki)	123
5	Matt Lee (KTM)	123
6	Stephen Wade (Kawasaki)	117

*Jake Nicholls (#45) hits the first turn flanked by PAR Homes pair Ashley Greedy (#33) and Shane Carless (#66)*



# HOME RULE!

**Scandinavian riders dominate the opening round of the '07 WEC series**

Words & photo by Jonty Edmunds

**FINNISH FOURSOME** Juha Salminen, Samuli Aro, Mika Ahola and Marko Tarkkala – along with Sweden's Enduro Junior class rider Joakim Ljunggren – are the big winners at the WEC's 'winter enduro' staged in northern Sweden where challenging weather conditions make the event tougher than expected.

Returning to the WEC in style after his two-year US GNCC sabbatical, Salminen dominates the Enduro 1 class and wins comfortably on both days. "It's a great way to start the season, especially on my return to the WEC. It's been a long time since I last raced with spiked tyres so I'm pleased with the way it went," comments the six-time world champ.

With little to separate them on day one, Aro and Ahola battle right up to the last test of the day for the E2 class win where both riders fall and Aro claims the narrowest of day wins. But on day two the tables are reversed with Honda-mounted Ahola setting a pace Aro and his KTM fail to match as the two Finns swap positions.

With no David Knight to compete against, KTM's Tarkkala has things all his own way in the E3 class with two easy wins. Following home veteran Swede Bjorne Carlsson both days, reigning E1 world champion and E3 class new boy Ivan Cervantes finishes with two well deserved podium finishes.

Opting to remain in the Enduro Junior class and defend his title, Sweden's Joakim Ljunggren gives his rivals an impressive hiding as he breezes to two dominant day wins. Competing in his first WEC event, KTM-mounted Tom Sagar claims sixth on day one and 12th on day two.

## Series standings

### E1

1	Juha Salminen (KTM)	50 points
2	Tomi Peltola (Suzuki)	38
3	Bartosz Oblucki (Husqvarna)	38

### E2

1	Mika Ahola (Honda)	47 points
2	Samuli Aro (KTM)	47
3	Valtteri Salonen (Husaberg)	40

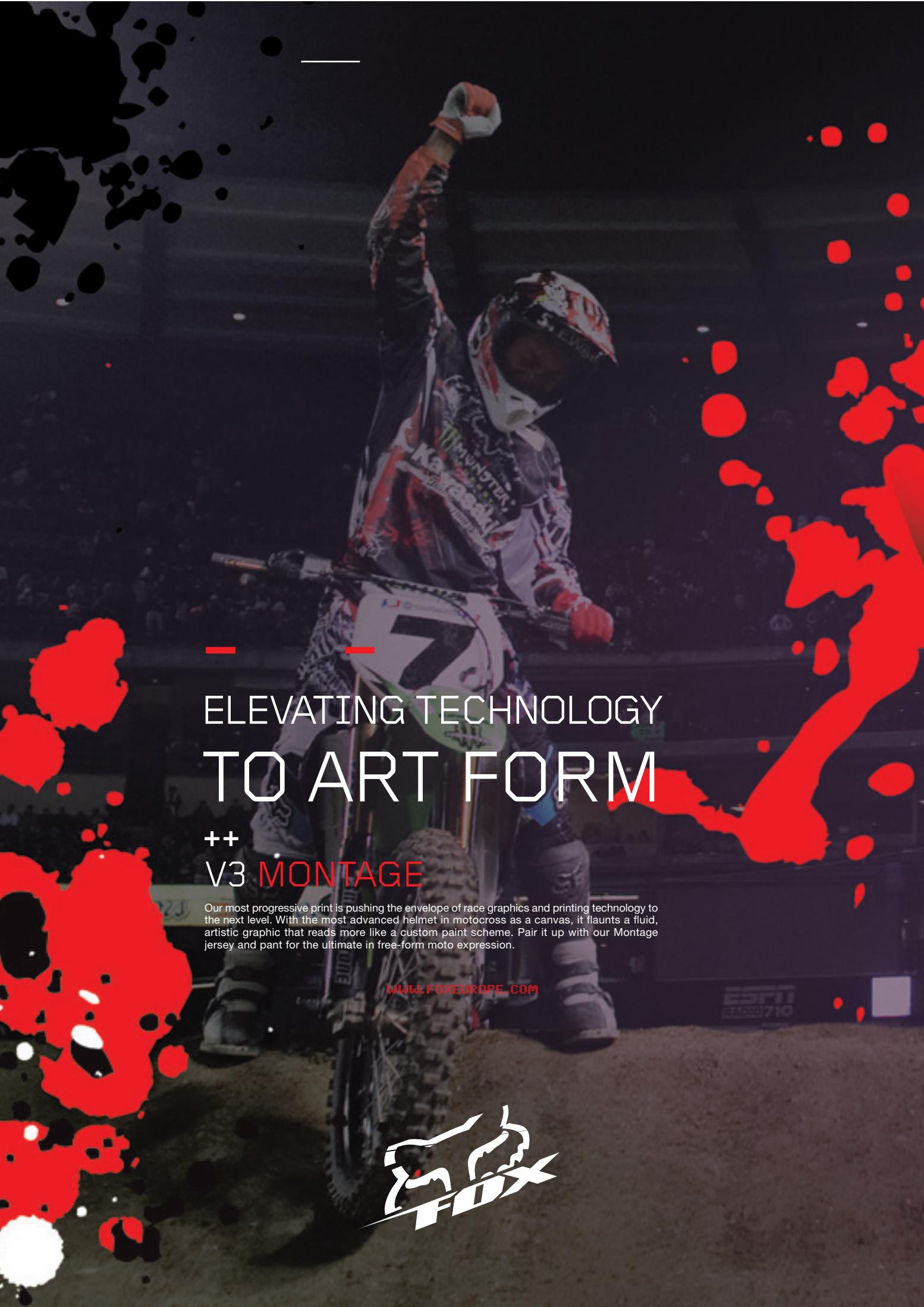
### E3

1	Marko Tarkkala (KTM)	50 points
2	Bjorne Carlsson (Husaberg)	44
3	Ivan Cervantes (KTM)	40

### EJ

1	Joakim Ljunggren (Husaberg)	50 points
2	Olli Turma (KTM)	36
3	Ricard Wressel (Husaberg)	34
6	Tom Sagar (KTM)	24

*Alessandro Belometti blasts his way through the Swedish snow*



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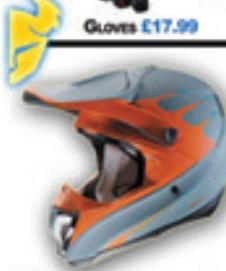
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# rage

YOUTH DIRT BIKING AT ITS BEST



## SMITH'S CRISP!

AFTER AN INJURY RAVAGED '06  
ALFIE'S BACK IN THE SADDLE

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COLD, COLD CULHAM

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# SMITH'S CRISP!

BOUNCING BACK FROM INJURY ALFIE SMITH IS FULLY TUNED-IN AND REVVED-UP FOR 2007!

Words and photos by still-mx.co.uk

**2**006 was definitely not Alfie Smith's year as a broken leg then a broken wrist saw him sidelined for most of the season but now he's ready, able and willing to race again. With the first big BYMX race of the year coming up at Desertmartin, Rage caught up with Alfie during an Essex MX practice session to see what he has to say for himself.

**Rage:** For those who don't know give us a brief history of Alfie Smith's MX career.  
AS: "I started racing at the age of six which was in 1999. I have won various club championships and I got a third in the British Supercross in 2003. My best year so far was 2004 when I won the BSMA and BYMX championships in the 65cc class, the BSMA Finals and was second in the World Mini Trophy in Belgium. In 2005 I moved up to small-wheel 85s and got fifth in the BSMA championship – 2006 was a non-starter."

"It was all over before I had a chance to get going. It was really frustrating watching the nationals season start without me. Mid-season,

coming back from a broken leg I managed to find some form again. Then at my second BSMA national round I qualified in pole position, won my race on the first day then broke my arm in the first race of the second day... Gutted!"

**Rage:** But you're back to fitness now or do the injuries still give you any grief?

AS: "I've trained hard and I feel confident. My wrist does ache a little in the cold but hopefully this will pass in time."

**Rage:** With the injuries you picked up your fitness level must have dropped way down. How do you train after such injuries?

AS: "I was very fit before my injuries and getting back wasn't too bad. Riding my push bike and swimming have really helped my fitness and as always a lot of time back on the MX bike will benefit my overall condition."

**Rage:** I bet you can't wait to get back racing?  
AS: "Of course, I've been ready for a while and

I'm going out to do my best. After last year's problems I am focused on what I need to do and I'll be first in the queue when it's time to line up on the gate."

**Rage:** Did all the watching in '06 not drive you mad?

AS: "You can learn a lot by watching but being sidelined through injury is definitely the most frustrating experience I've had in motocross. That's all behind me now and I'm concentrating on the future."

**Rage:** We've seen you out on bigger bikes today including a 250F and a 125cc two-stroke. Will we see you move up next year?

AS: "There's a good chance but I just need to grow a little. I really don't fancy having to use blocks on the start line. I do like the 250F but we haven't made any decisions yet. We will just see what happens this year and take it from there. Until then I will be on the Honda CRF150 which is proving to be an all round competitive bike. I still think I'm going to have to squeeze



every little bit horse power out of the bike to be in front."

**Rage:** So what are you thoughts on the bigger bikes, the extra power they deliver must have you pretty excited about possibly riding them in the not-so-distant future?

AS: "I find the bigger bikes are easier to ride because the extra power can get me out of trouble easier and they handle the bumps better. I can't wait to race in the 125 class."

**Rage:** So would you ever be tempted onto a two-stroke when you move up?

AS: "Yeah if I could get some financial backing I would like to have a 125 and a 250F."

**Rage:** With the current crop of outstanding riders this country is producing is there someone out there that you would like to follow in the footsteps of?

AS: "It has to be Tommy Searle as he's getting better all the time. Former champions like Greg Hanson and Dave Thorpe inspire me because

of their style of riding – Greg's still quick for an old man!"

**Rage:** Which championships are you racing?

AS: "The BYMX series, the Elite Youth Cup, the BSMA national series and if there is any space left in my tight schedule, maybe a couple of European meetings. I just want to get out and race again and there just is not enough weekends in the year for me at the moment."

**Rage:** As everyone knows motocross is an expensive pastime and getting outside help is essential unless you are the son of Roman Abramovich of course. What sort of help do you have and who would you like to thank?

AS: "I have a lot of people backing me this year and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all – Fox Europe, Dave and Vicky at T&W Racing, Brian Costello for supplying the machinery, Cox Green Auto Supplies, Clinton of SPH Ltd, SLR Tuning and don't forget my mum, dad, little sis and Johnny Rogers for all their time and effort."

# MAX!

RAGE'S MINI WARRIOR IS VEGAS BOUND  
BUT BEFORE THAT THERE'S A DUTCH  
CHAMPIONSHIP RACE TO TAKE CARE OF...

We travelled to Holland for the opening round of the Dutch International Championship in Gemert. This race is just like a GP with MX1 and MX2 classes featuring riders like Coppins, De Reuver, Ramon, Rattray and Swanepoel and also an 85cc class alongside.

The weather had been perfect for the last two days then on the morning of the race it was chucking it down. The track seemed to cope quite well but there were some really boggy sections. This was a problem for me because I was well under-powered.

In deep whoopy conditions it's okay because it's all about skill but when it's all about horsepower I'm on the back foot. But it's also not so bad because it teaches you to get the best out of your bike and catching all the little edges to make the difference. A lot of my friends came out to cheer me on and so did my little brother, Taylor.

In timed training I set a good time placing me in second behind Jeffery Herlings. I went through three sets of goggles because the rain was just running straight underneath my tear-offs no matter how many I had on.

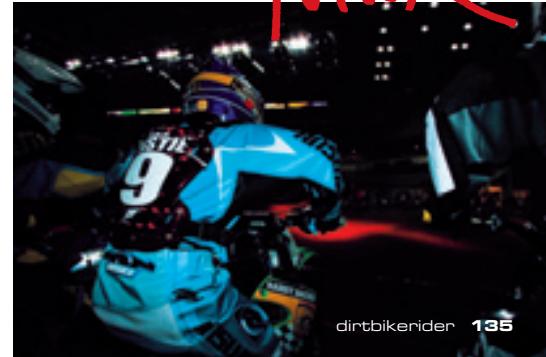
In the first moto I got a bad gate but I got up to third then my bike stopped! Eventually after nearly everyone had passed me back with some help I got it going again. I worked my way through to eighth but had lost a lot of valuable points – just my luck. Obviously I wasn't happy but I regathered myself for the next moto and went out on my brand new bike that I hadn't even ridden. The rain had stopped and the track was getting more technical.

I got a lot better gate than the first one and was sat in second. Herlings was about five seconds in front and within three laps I had reeled him in. I made my move around a whoopy berm then put in a solid lap and broke him. I was sat at about five seconds in front and I kept it that way until the chequers.

Winning was the easy bit as we now had to drive home then get the bags packed because at 11am the next day we were flying out to America to get ready for the World Mini in Las Vegas. Obviously getting all my kit washed and packed was stressed but then as we were sat on the runway for the plane to take off they discovered a mechanical fault and we were delayed for about three hours. Finally we got on our way and so began my 11-hour-long school homework lesson.

Now that the season has started again we will be on the road for a lot of the time going to the European, Dutch and American championships. I'm hoping for a good season so wish me luck!

Max





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# MASTERBLASTERS!

IT'S COLD, COLD, COLD AT CULHAM BUT  
THE RACING'S HOT, HOT, HOT!

Words and photos by still-mx.co.uk

**A**s the bikes roar into action at a very cold and very windswept Culham circuit in Oxfordshire there's no doubting that the 2007 youth motocross season has started with round one of the British Masters MX series.

With the screaming 65s dropped from the series schedule for '07 it's the small-wheel 85s who kick things off with recent Rage star Rob Muscat taking the overall win ahead of Scott Aldridge and that pocket-sized rocket Paul Coates! A special mention must go to Mr Inconsistency Brad Pocock who wins moto two in fine style but ends up eighth overall after a bit of a disaster in race three.

In the big-wheel 85cc division double race-winner James Hutchinson finishes back in eighth overall after a moto one DNF. With the demise of Hutchinson it's Sheffield's Christian Taylor who takes the overall victory ahead of Richie Worrall and Ewan McLaren.

The Youth 125cc class is dominated by riders on 250 four-stroke machines. Kawasaki's Lewis King checks out all weekend leaving Hanson Racing's Jack Hawes and PAR Honda's Mel Pocock to scrap it out over second with Jack coming out on top thanks to the better last moto tie-breaker rule.

The British Master series now moves on to Dean Moor Moto Park in Cumbria for round two at the end of May – we'll see you there!

## Results

### SW 85cc

1 Rob Muscat 144 points, 2 Scott Aldridge 134, 3 Paul Coates 127, 4 James Rutter 125, 5 Bradley Banks 123, 6 Luke Norris 115

### BW 85cc

1 Christian Taylor 140 points, 2 Richie Worrall 137, 3 Ewan McLaren 129, 4 Matt Burrows 127, 5 Charles Statt 117, 6 Luke Hawkins 110

### Youth 125cc

1 Lewis King 150 points, 2 Jack Hawes 139, 3 Mel Pocock 137, 4 Joe Gregory 119, 5 David Games 113, 6 Tom Watts 113



Brad Pocock  
wins the second  
BW85 race



Christian Taylor's  
top BW85cc pilot



Ashley gets  
snap happy

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**P**ortsmouth ripper Ashley 'Showtime' Randell wins this month's Ride MX sponsored Rob Herring training school voucher thanks to this hot shot taken by Rage contributor Colin Jacobs – [cj-mxphoto.co.uk](http://cj-mxphoto.co.uk) – at Salisbury super venue Cuses Gorse.

To win a training day voucher of your own and to get your picture printed in Rage send us your favourite riding shot – maybe of you busting a berm, pulling a sick whip or simply gooning it up. If your picture is deemed to be the best by our expert panel of judges you'll not only win a Ride MX training voucher that's worth £75 but you'll also get your picture published in next month's Rage.

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# CORNISH FASTIES!

NEW MXY2 CLASS AT MAXXIS  
BRIT CHAMPS KICKS ASS!

**H**onda-mounted Manxman Alex Rockwell takes the win at round one of the Maxxis MXY2 championship at Landrake with a 1-3 scorecard. Team Green Kawasaki's Lewis

King and Josh Waterman round out the podium while moto two winner Max Trannah finishes fifth overall behind fellow KTM rider Kevin Wells after a moto one DNF.



## Results

BYMX2 – Landrake

1 Alex Rockwell 55 points, 2 Lewis King 52, 3 Josh Waterman 44, 4 Kevin Wells 42, 5 Max Trannah 30, 6 Graeme Irwin 30

Josh Waterman (#5)  
gets a great gate  
at Landrake

### Happy Snappers

Name.....

Age.....

Postal address.....

Daytime telephone number.....

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# DEATH OR GLORY!

AFTER HIS FIRST RACE NINTH AT VALKENSWAARD BILLY ABANDONS THE CAUTIOUS APPROACH AND REVERTS TO WIN-IT-OR-BIN-IT - CAN YOU GUESS WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

THESE COLUMNS come around so fast. It seems like only a couple of days before another SMS arrives from Mr Lawless nagging for my latest thoughts. Well, the season has started and it would make more sense to chat about my first MX1 GP with Kawasaki at Valkenswaard as that was the big event of the last few weeks in between a couple of British rounds that went okay but nothing special (and I should have won at least one of them).

Anyway, the build up to my debut as a full-time MX1 rider (I had made a couple of races in the class back in 2004 on the Yamaha) started with a trip to Lommel and some testing in the sand. I would be spending a week in the camper so I stocked up and also invented a cheap solution to prevent getting robbed again by strapping some bungees to the inside of the door and then the side of the fridge.

I was testing on Tuesday and then just riding on Wednesday in Belgium and it was the best thing I could have done because I was lacking some time in the sand since I had broken my collarbone. I followed the Motovision team over as they were letting me stay outside their apartment. It was very relaxed because you cannot get out on the tracks until after 1pm over there so each day started off quite chilled.

I was more nervous than I had been for a while at the GP. Everything was affecting me – the new team, new class, new stage of my career. Before the race I was fine but on the day and the hours leading up to it I had butterflies in my stomach and I had to go to the loo 10 times before the race! I had made a plan with myself that I wanted two top-10 finishes to start me off and that was what I was aiming for.

As I'm on the factory team and have been talked about in the media during the pre-season I feel a bit more like I 'belong' in the paddock now, like I was part of the top group. It was different to what I was used to with Steve in the little Yamaha clique. It felt like everything had opened up. Journalists were saying hello and it seemed like I spent the whole weekend acknowledging most of the paddock instead of mainly keeping myself to myself like I had before.

In my first GP moto as a works Kawasaki rider I felt like the pace was really good and quite easy. I was itching to attack the track but the thing with MX1 is that you have to keep your rhythm and can't go at things in fits and starts like in MX2 so that first moto was all about finding that balance.

I was ninth in the first moto but I wasn't happy with it because I lost a couple of positions on the last lap. I got it in the ear from my dad and my mechanic. "What happened? You died off in the last 25 minutes," they were saying and questioning my fitness and my race pace. I felt like saying "guys, chill out". It made me wanna get out and prove them wrong, like I seem to have to do many times. I suppose it is part and parcel of having your dad there and people behind you and wanting you to do well.

For my part I felt like I was fully prepared. Just because I had slowed down a little bit in the first race

there were all these questions so my plan of going for two top 10s and some points on the board went out the window for the next race and I was back to win-it-or-bin-it style and wanting to prove that I could run the pace and stay up there with the others. I was doing it and going for sixth place but inevitably it ended up in a crash! They were all happy then after the second moto, despite the fact that I didn't score points! It was a bit bizarre. I knew I had the speed and ended up showing it in a roundabout way.



Leok and Philippaerts didn't have great days and I took some confidence from running in the top five for long parts of the first moto and then pushing for the top six in the second race. The most frustrating part of the weekend was the crash. It was pretty stupid and the ground gave way as I came out the rut and went for the final double through the whoops. I was tired like everyone but once you crash and break your rhythm you realise just how knackered you are. I picked the bike up and because I was in the middle of the whoops it was hard to get it into position so I could get full leverage on the kick, especially with aching shoulders! I had to move it a couple of times and was really p\*\*\*\*d off. I was begging the bike to fire but it seemed to take forever.

I'm definitely looking forward to Bellpuig. I can't wait to get there. After my result in Holland I suppose it is easy to look and think 'typical MacKenzie, a finish and a DNF' but I know with all the training I have done and being around the team that I can be up on the podium in the next couple of races.

My website is now looking quite trick and there is a new video section. We have a good one of us camping out and riding in Scotland. It was made just before Canada Heights. My brother and I, my cousin Bryan and an Aussie kid called Hayden went up to the north of Scotland for a few days to the track where I broke my collarbone. We took all the equipment, including the cameras, made a bonfire and got some training done. Hayden is pretty switched-on when it comes to making videos and he uploaded what he had edited to YouTube. They all found it quite funny that I was working on my own bike because they thought I didn't really know what I was doing – you can judge for yourself!



*Billy 11*



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